SYNTHETIC BIBLE STUDIES

JAMES M. GRAY, D.D.

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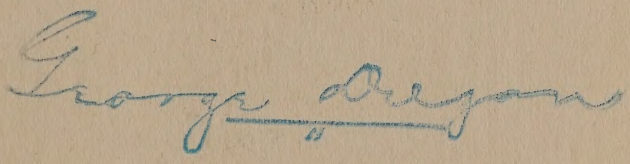

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THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

SYNTHETIC BIBLE STUDIES,

Or THRO' THE BIBLE IN THE YEAR.

Geo. Dugan

By JAMES M. GRAY, D. D., Author of "Bulwarks of Faith."

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FIFTY-ONE CONCISE, CLEAR AND VALUABLE EXPOSITIONS OF SCRIPTURE, GIVING A BIRD'S-EYE VIEW OF THE BIBLE. MADE SO PLAIN THAT THE ORDINARY BIBLE READER CAN COMPREHEND IT, AND SO EXHAUSTIVE AS TO BE HELPFUL TO MINISTERS OR DOCTORS OF DIVINITY.

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PUBLISHER'S NOTE.

These Synthetic Bible Studies cover twenty-two books of the Old and twenty-one books of the New Testament. Those of the former omitted are the poetical books and a few of the minor prophets; and of the latter the shorter and less important epistles.

They originally appeared in a religions weekly, and were so widely used and blessed to ministers and Bible students generally, that in response to an earnest and very general request, they have been gathered together in this more permanent form.

There has been little opportunity for revision on the part of the author, so that the matter appears in the personal and familiar style of a teacher addressing a class of other teachers, which had been adopted in the newspaper articles. But while the author would wish to have omitted some expressions and changed others to conform more nearly to book literature, it is believed that the absence of the commonplace in this particular gives additional attraction and helpfulness to the work.

The design is not that readers should study this book, but study the Bible by its aid. To that end it is hoped it will be found useful in the organization and conduct of Bible Classes in churches, Endeavor Societies and Young Men's Christian Associations, but especially in frontier towns and other pleces where facilities for Bible study are meagre, and people are hungering for the Word of God. Young Christian workers with limited equipment will find it particulary helpful in the preparation of expository sermons and Bible readings.

INTRODUCTION.

We are to engage in what is called the synthetic study of the Bible, which means, as we use the term, the study of the Bible as a whole, and each book of the Bible as a whole, and as seen in its relation to the other books. The word "Synthesis" has the opposite meaning to "Analysis." When we analyze a subject we take it apart and consider it in its various elements, but when we synthesize it we put it together and consider it as a whole, which is what we are now about to do in a certain sense with the Word of God.

THE VALUE OF THE PLAN.

The value of the plan may be illustrated in different ways. Suppose you were about to study history, you would find it desirable to read first an outline of the world's history, a single volume, say, a small book, but one which would give you almost at a single glance a comprehensive survey of the whole field. The impression might be dim, but you would feel a satisfaction, a sense of power in knowing that your eye had swept the horizon, and that afterwards everything you saw would be within those limits. Then you would take up in their order each of the three great divisions of history, ancient, medieval and modern, and study or read them more particularly. Following this you would concentrate your attention on one division, multiplying the books read, but limiting the range of thought and focusing the mind upon some special period or nation. It is thus you would become a master of the subject.

Suppose it were geography instead of history. You would first look at a globe, or map of the world, and after that single, all-including glimpse, you could more intelligently consider the hemispheres, continents and states, and ultimately the mountain ranges, rivers and lakes. It would be abstruse, tedious and difficult were you to begin the other way and work backwards, and yet that is the method many employ in Bible study, accounting in great measure for their lukewarmness in it and the paucity of results.

I have read of an English mountain climber who, whenever exploring a new region, always ascends the highest summit first. He thus gathers a bird's eye view of the whole section, and can pursue the investigation of the lower levels with an understanding of their relativity that strengthens his grasp of the situation with every movement he makes. That plan needs to be applied for successful Bible study. Let us use the telescope first and the microscope afterwards.

WHAT IT HAS DONE.

Just to interest you a little more and get you lovingly wedded to the idea, let me tell you some of the results this plan of Bible study has wrought. You will forgive a personal allusion, I trust. It is about twelve years since the Holy Spirit impressed it upon my attention in answer to long continued prayer for light upon

the subject. The whole story would not be uninteresting were there time to tell it, but I can only say that from that day to this the blessing that has followed me has been like the mountain stream that increases as it flows towards the great ocean. First there came a strengthening of conviction as to the infallibility of the Bible—every part of it, and this was followed by a deepening of my own inner spiritual life, then a broadening of my whole mental vision so that I came to have an interest in the pursuit of related studies such as never before, and finally a lightening of my labors in the ministry that made previous drudgery a present delight. Oh, how easy it is to get sermons, and how rich, and helpful and attractive they are to both sinners and saints when you know how to find them in the Bible! Here is a hint surely not only to pastors and evangelists, but Christian workers of all classes who have religious talks and addresses to make, and public meetings to conduct. How glad you are to do it, but how difficult and unsatisfactory the work seems! How you long to get hold of the Word of God in such a way as to put yourself and others at ease in engaging in such service!

Shortly after applying this method of Bible study in my own case I began to experiment on others, some theological students who were under my care, with like blessed results. Then the plan became introduced to different Bible institutes and at least one theological seminary in the land. Here two classes of minds were met; those which had a university training and others which had scarcely more than a common school education, but the effect was just the same in either case, and now not only hundreds but thousands of such students, some of them in the uttermost parts of the earth, are praising God for having revealed to them His Word in this simple way.

Out of these institute classes gradually grew the popular evening classes in different parts of the country, and more latterly in London, England. In many instances these have reached a membership of 1,000 or more, and are held weekly both summer and winter, with a sustained interest and enthusiasm. As I am not the only teacher of these classes by any means, I can speak of them with the greater freedom.

And this brings up the question as to whether anybody can conduct such a class in his own church or town, as the result of following out the lessons, and I am hapy to be able to say that such is the case if they will do what they are asked to do in the few simple rules now to be given.

WHAT THE CLASS IS TO DO.

The first thing expected of you is that you will read the lesson assigned to you each week. Little can be gained in any kind of Bible study without this, and especially under the present plan. Its great advantage lies in getting the people to read the Bible for themselves. You are not asked to memorize what you read, or tax your energies in any other respect than by the simple reading. Let the task be made in that respect just as easy and pleasant as it can be made.

The second rule is, read the lesson continuously. By this I mean two things, In the first place, always read the lesson through at a single sitting. Do not read part of it now, and part some other time, but if it be possible read it all at once. In the second place, do not be influenced by the chapters and verses when you read. They are valuable for reference, but often hinder in other respects in getting at the mind of the writer. This rule is necessary to be

observed with great particularity, since it is only by the continuous reading of a given book or part of a book, that we can grasp the central line of thought, the pivotal idea, which is so essential to the understanding of the others related to it.

The third rule is, read the lesson repeatedly. Even if it is needful to read it more rapidly than you would otherwise wish to do, for the present purpose I should prefer you to read it several times rapidly than only once very slowly. You will appreciate the reason for this better as we proceed, but just now please take it on faith and do what your teacher asks. The first time you go over the lesson in this way you may see nothing in it that your mind takes hold of, but the next time you will see a little, and the next more, and so on till the complete outline stands out clearly before you. This is what I desire to accomplish in you, and for you. By God's blessing you shall see what you can yourselves do in mastering His Word, and it will greatly increase your sense of spiritual power and joy.

The fourth rule is, read the lesson independently. Do not fly to the commentary and Bible "help" for assistance till after you have finished the lesson with your teacher. This is not to depreciate such assistance which is invaluable in its place, neither is it to inspire an inflated idea of what you are going to get here, but to emphasize what was said above. To master the English Bible you must begin by getting your own individual impression of the contents or outline of each book. This, even if far out of the way, is better for a learner than the impression of some one else who is nearer correct. The drill of changing and qualifying what you think you have obtained is of great value in the end. Moreover, you will not fall so wide of the mark as some of you may in your modesty imagine. You will be delightfully disappointed at your success. And then too what you get will be you own, and no matter how it may be altered afterward by subsequent study, it will still be your own and you will always be the stronger for it. You will have the consciousness of walking on your feet and not on stilts.

The last rule, but not the least by any means, is to read the lesson prayerfully. There are two reasons for this: In the first place, the Bible can not be studied "just like any other book," because it is unlike every other book in the world. It is God's own Book. The Holy Spirit wrote it through holy men of old (2 Peter 1:21), and its Author is, after all, its only true and safe interpreter. Coleridge said: "The Bible without the Holy Spirit is a sun-dial by moonlight," and a greater than he said: "We have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God, that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God." (1 Corinthians 2:12), and these things though written in the Bible and read by us, cannot be known without Him.

But then the other reason is this: Do we not want this great Bible class to be something more than a feast of intellect? Do we not want Him whom our soul loveth to tell us where He feeds His flock, where He makest them to rest at noon? (Solomon's Song 1:7). Do we not want to be caused to lie down in the green pastures and led beside the still waters? Do we not desire a rich blessing in our souls? Do we not want our connection with this class to be ever memorable in our experience as a time when in a new sense we were exalted to sit together in Heavenly places in Christ Jesus? But how can this be without the power of the Holy

Ghost through the Word, and how shall we obtain this power except as we ask? (Luke 11:13). Cultivate prayer, I beseech you. Punctuate the reading of every book and chapter and verse with it if you want this study to be a real delight.

THE FIRST LESSON.

The lesson for next week will be Genesis, chapters one to eleven inclusive (1-11). We shall study the Old Testament first, and the New Testament afterward, taking up the books as nearly as possible in the chronological order in which the Holy Spirit caused them to be written. It is well to follow in the channel He Himself has thus marked out for us, and we shall appreciate the advantage of it before we have traveled very far. Please look over the rules given above to see what you are to do with these chapters. There is just one qualification I would make, viz., that as two or three of these chapters are given to geneaological tables you need not feel obliged to read them more than once. Read them once, however, out of regard to Him who caused them "to be written for our learning," and it may be you will find some nuggets of gold hidden away there that will repay you for your pains.

The lesson is Genesis 1-11th chapters inclusive.

The rules are:

1. Read the lesson.
2. Read it continuously.
3. Read it repeatedly.
4. Read it independently.
5. Read it prayerfully

James M. Gray.

SYNTHETIC BIBLE STUDIES,

or, Thro' the Bible in the Year.

LESSON I. GENESIS I to II.

WE begin our first lesson today, and the first question is, Are you prepared for it? Have you read the lesson? Continuously? How many many times have you read it? Have you read it seven times, i. e., once every day? Have you prayed over it? All this is essential, and must be done if you are to reap the blessing. And is it not simple, and are you not willing to do it?

The object now before us is to get hold of the facts of this lesson. We shall not do much in the way of their interpretation, indeed, that is not our thought in any of these lessons. The facts must come first and interpretation afterwards. To a great extent if we get the facts the interpretation will take care of itself, for the Bible is wonderfully self-interpretative. Moreover, until the facts are clearly seen, we are not ready for interpretation. This latter also can be gathered from books which will be suggested as we go along perhaps, but the facts, the basis of all Bible study, can only be obtained by the synthetic reading of the Bible itself.

And it is only the great outline facts we are seeking. To have too many of them in our minds would defeat one of the purposes in view which is not only to obtain, but to retain what we get. And then, too, it will be found that if the reading be done as requested in the introductory lesson last week, the great facts will easily suggest and bring to mind the lesser ones related to them. Of this we shall be persuaded as we advance.

The Word Outline.

What then is the first great fact in the book of Genesis? At once, you respond, "The creation of the world." What are its chapters? 1 and 2. Now give the next great fact. "The fall," chapter 3. The next? "The deluge," chapters 5-9. And the last, so far as this lesson is concerned? "The dispersion of the nations," chapters 10-11.

I wish you could answer these questions to yourselves or somebody else, before seeing my answers, but if this is impossible the next best thing is to verify mine, and if you are able please do so without referring to the Bible. I do not want you to memorize anything in preparation for each lesson, but when you come to recite in the class as you are doing now, it will be a help to you to do so. The following then is our word outline of the lesson:—

Creation, 1-2.
Fall, 3.
Deluge, 5-9.
Nations, 10-11.

Only four words, but if we have done the reading asked they will suggest to us the general details that group themselves under each one. Let us see if this is not true.

The First Great Fact.

What does the word "Creation" suggest? Can you state the events of the six days in their order? Here they are:—

Light.
Firmament.
The Dry Land.
Light-holders.
Fish and Fowl.
Cattle and Man.

Notice, that light was created four days before the sun. Objectors to the Mosaic record used to laugh at that, and say there could have been no light before the sun, since the sun was the source of light. But later scientific discoveries indicate that there is a light separate from the sun—that the earth itself is luminous. This gives authority for the use of the word "Light-holders" as applied to the creation of the fourth day.

Notice, that the word "Firmament" means the expanse or atmosphere that is around the earth supporting the clouds.

Notice, that in the case of "The Dry Land" the herb and the tree came first and the seed in each case afterwards, different from what we observe now, and yet as science shows inevitable at the beginning. Here again we have a comparatively recent confirmation of the authority and inspiration of the Mosaic record.

The Law of Recurrence.

But this does not exhaust the word "Creation." What have we in chapter 2 different from chapter 1? After referring to the hallowing of the seventh day, the writer describes more in detail one of the acts of creation spoken of only in a general way before. What act is it? "The creation of man." Here then we meet for the first time a peculiarity of the rhetoric of the Holy Spirit with which it is necessary for us to become acquainted at once. We shall need to recognize it many times in the course of our work, especially in the more difficult books of the prophets, and to understand it is vital either to get at their facts or the interpretation of them. This peculiarity is defined as the Law of Recurrence. Look at the name well, and get it fastened on your mind. Now, what is the law of recurrence? It is that peculiarity of the Holy Spirit as an Author by which He gives first the outlines of a subject, and then recurs to it again for the purpose of adding details. To quote the language of a great authority on Bible exegesis, "Many have quite overlooked this, and read Scripture as if

the order of narration were always the order of accomplishment, and as if consecutive chapters were necessarily consecutive as to time. But if Scripture be read so, confusion and mistakes are certain."

In the first chapter then, we have the account of creation in outline, and in the second chapter part of the same account in detail. The part thus given in detail concerns the creation of man. There is a reason for this detail about man in all that follows, for the Bible is not a history of the world, but a history of man, especially the redemption of man. But what are these details about the creation of man? There are at least four, (a), the nature of his being, verse 7, (b), the location in which he was placed, verses 8-14, (c), the moral test laid upon him, verses 15-17, and (d), the help-meet given him, verses 18-25. Let us place them in this position where we can more readily recognize them:—

Nature.
Location.
Moral test.
Help-meet.

Notice, that the nature of man seems to be three-fold. There was first his body made of the dust of the ground, then the breath or spirit of life put into it, and finally the combining of these two forming a third, so that "the man became a living soul." (Compare 1 Thessalonians 5:23.) It is said, chapter 1 verse 26, that God made "man in His own image," and morally that is explained in part by such a passage as Colossians 3:10, but constructively, if one may use such a word in this connection, it is explained by the fact that God Himself is a Trinity in unity, and has given us this reflection and proof of Himself in our own nature.

Notice, that the whole description of the location of man in Eden carries on the face of it the idea of historicity. Eden and the story associated with it can hardly be a myth when we see the Holy Spirit laboring so to speak, to identify its whereabouts not only by the names of the rivers flowing out of it, and the countries they watered, but even the very nature of the soil of those countries.

Notice, that Adam was a highly intelligent man to be able to name every living creature brought before him, and that this fact has a bearing upon the assumption of some that man is a development from a lower animal.

The Second Great Fact.

As we have thus divided the word "creation" into its lesser facts, let us do the same for the word "fall." Can you recall the details of the chapter for which it stands? Name the different persons brought before us, thus:—

The Serpent.
The Woman.
The Man.
The Lord God.

Name the events in their order, thus:—

The temptation of the serpent, 1-5.
The fall of the woman and the man, 6-8.
The appearance of the Lord God, 9-13.
The pronouncement of the curse, 14-19.
The provision of a covering, 21.
The exclusion from the garden, 22-24.

Notice verse 15 especially, and familiarize yourself with the language of the first promise of hope and redemption for fallen man, because that promise is historically the source of all the other promises of Christ in type and prophecy with which the Old Testament abounds.

Notice, that the "serpent" represented more than a mere "beast of the field," judging by his reasoning faculties as well as power of speech, and compare that conclusion with Revelation 12:9, and 20:2, where the Holy Spirit plainly identifies him with Satan.

Notice, the plan adopted in the temptation of the woman as outlined in verse six, and compare it with 1 John 2:16, which indicates it to be the representative plan by which Satan tempts every man; and then examine the record of Christ's temptation in the wilderness (Luke 4), to discover that it signally failed in the case of the Second Adam.

Notice, that verse 21 contains a suggestion in miniature of the whole plan of redemption through the shed blood of a substitutionary victim. The "coats of skin" could not have been obtained without the death of an innocent animal, while the covering of our first parents with them naturally suggests such a passage as Isaiah 61:10, or Romans 3:22, or 2 Corinthians 4:21. May not such an interpretation of this verse throw light on Hebrews 11:4? What was that as to which Abel had "faith," if not this previous revelation of the necessity of a sacrificial victim and a mediator through which to approach God? Was it not Cain's rejection of God's way of access that led to his own rejection?

Notice, that the expulsion of the guilty pair from Eden was not an act of judgment unmitigated by mercy, for as they had now "obtained the knowledge of good and evil without the power of resisting evil," it would have added to their calamity if, by eating of "the tree of life," they had rendered that state everlasting.

The Third Great Fact.

The third word in our word outline suggesting the third fact is the "Deluge," chapters 5-9. It may be asked, Why include chapter 5? But only those who have not read as they were requested to do will be likely to ask that question, for it will be seen that on the principle of "the law of recurrence" that chapter was written for the purpose of calling particular attention to the genealogy of Noah, whose name is synonymous with that of the deluge. It may be well to read chapters 4 and 5 over again that one

or two things may be pointed out. After Cain is brought conspicuously before us by the murder of his brother, his issue is traced for a little way until the line ends in another murderer, his great-grandson Lamech, (verses 18-23). Then the Holy Spirit seeks to interest us in another kind of man altogether, the third son born to Adam and Eve, named Seth, (verses 25, 26), in whose line came Noah, Shem, Abraham, Jacob, and by-and-by, Jesus Himself, the seed of the woman who bruised the serpent's head. In order to fix attention on Seth, and thus on Noah, the Divine Author recurs at the beginning of chapter five to the original account of the creation of man, traces the history of Adam briefly, and then gives in detail the line of Seth.

Now we are ready for details under the word "deluge." What is the rough analysis of chapters 5-9?

The genealogy of Noah, 5.
The building of the ark, 6.
The occupancy of the ark, 7.
The departure from the ark, 8.
The covenant with Noah, 9.

Notice, the marked distinction between the Cainites and the Sethites, who even at that early day represented the world and the church. The first built cities, invented arts and devised amusements to palliate the curse on sin (chapter 4), but the second seemed more meekly to follow God in His directions for getting rid of sin. It is to the latter the words at the close of chapter 4 seem to apply. The word "LORD" there in capitals, indicates that in the original it is Jehovah, the covenant name of God, that name which they know and love who believe and have hope in His promise, 3:15. Is it not something more than curious that the seventh from Adam in the line of Cain (Lamech), was "a polygamist, murderer, and worshipper of the god of forces," while the seventh in the line of Seth (Enoch) was a man who "had this testimony that he pleased God" (Hebrews 11:5)? The Sethites were corrupted by-and-by through evil associations, and yet their line was preserved in Noah.

Notice carefully the causes leading up to what has been called "the ante-deluvian apostacy," and observe that the fearful progress of wickedness was coincident with a rapid advance in civilization (4:16-22), and that the female sex came into peculiar prominence in connection with the disregard of the primal law of marriage (6:1-2). For a startling analysis of the conditions of the period the student is recommended to a volume entitled, "Earth's Earliest Ages," by G. H. Pember. Interest in such a study is stimulated by the fact that "as it was in the days of Noah, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of man," (Luke 17:26-27). Notice, that the number of living creatures entering the ark may not have been as large as some suppose, since "it has been calculated that there are not more than three hundred distinct species of beasts and birds."

Notice certain changes made in the covenant with Noah as distinct from that made with Adam. (a) Man's dominion over the inferior animals is now based on their dread of him, where probably love ruled before. (b) Man is now permitted, indeed commanded, to eat animal food, the blood only restricted. A possible reason for the command is suggested in the volume referred to above. (c) Man is now put under human law as well as Divine (9:5-6). All this seems to be in keeping with man's deterioration from what God made him at the beginning.

Notice the pledge of peace. Some think from Genesis 2:5-6, that it had never rained upon the earth till the flood, and that the rainbow was a new phenomenon. If so, with what joy it would be welcomed whenever thereafter showers began to fall!

The Fourth Great Fact.

The last word in our outline is "Nations," 10-11, where we again have something corresponding to the law of recurrence. That is, the reading of these two chapter discloses that the first treats of the dispersion of the nations in general, and the second in detail, or the first tells how and the second why they were divided.

Examining chapter 10, on what basis were the nations divided? According to the sons of Noah. A map will be useful here, and you will probably find one in the back of your Bible. Fasten in mind the names of some of the sons and grandsons of Japheth, and then look at the map in the region of the Black and Caspian seas, and also a little further to the left toward Greece, where the same names occur. Do the same with the names of Ham's descendants and look for them in the region of Canaan, Egypt and Africa. Trace Shem's line in the same way through Assyria, Persia, etc., thus discovering by a comparison of ancient geography and ethnology, that the first-named settled in the north and northwest, the second in the south and southwest, and the third, while remaining near the starting- point, diverged a little to the south and southeast.

What are the details of Chapter 11? Recall them from memory if possible, and then write them like this:—

The unity of speech.
The settlement in Shinar.
The building of the city and tower.
The anger and judgment of God.
The dispersion abroad.

Notice the illustration of the law of recurrence here, and how that according to our style of writing, the contents of chapter 11 would naturally precede those

the histories of Abraham and Isaac. Please review the rules given in the introductory lesson to see again how these chapters should be read.

of chapter 10, but that the Holy Spirit reverses the order and tells how the nations were divided to the different points of the compass first, and then explains in detail why the transaction took place.

Notice the prophetic outline of the history of the three sons of Noah, chapter 11:19-27. The curse on Canaan has been fulfilled in the destruction of the Canaanites, the degradation of Egypt, and the slavery of the Africans. The blessing on Shem has been seen in the special watchcare over Israel and the establishment of the church in Jesus Christ, while the enlargement of Japheth is illustrated in the activity and enterprise of the European nations. That Japheth should dwell in the tents of Shem is seen politically, in the fact that India, whose people came from Shem, is ruled by Great Britain, and indeed the larger part of Asia is controlled by Europe. But it is seen religiously, and from quite a different point of view in the further circumstance that Shem has been a benediction to Japheth in giving him his knowledge of God. The sacred oracles were committed to the line of Shem, and Europe is indebted to Asia for Christianity. There is a difference of opinion as to which of the two views of this particular prophecy is to be entertained.

Notice the name of the city in this chapter, Babel, or Babylon, which means confusion or mixture. Observe the name of the worldly spirit of its founder as indicated in chapter 10:8-11. This is interesting in the light of Babylon's subsequent history as told in the books of Kings and Chronicles, and the Prophets, and especially in the light of what we read about it as yet to come to pass perhaps, in Revelation 17 and 18.

Notice, that as by "one miracle of tongues men were dispersed and gradually fell from the true religion, by another (Acts 2), national barriers were broken down that all might be brought back to the one family of God."

Concluding Remarks.

Few of the lessons to follow will occupy as much space as this perhaps, and some of them much less. Students are not expected to recite on that part of the lesson introduced in every case by the word Notice. Those paragraphs may be read but not necessarily studied. The rest of the lesson should be studied, and the subject-matter retained till next week, when review questions will be asked. It is expected that thus a large proportion of the work covered will become the firm possession of the different members of the class, and if so, it will be an invaluable foundation for any kind of future Bible study to be engaged in.

The Next Lesson.

The next lesson will be quite different from this in some respects, and cover chapters twelve to twenty-eight inclusive.

Jan 18

BEFORE we begin lesson 2, let us see if we have gotten lesson 1 in mind. Please read over the last lesson again, and then try to answer these questions:—

1. Give the word outline of Genesis 1-11.
2. Give the meaning of the law of recurrence.
3. Give the instances in which it is illustrated in the lesson.
4. Give in a word or two the distinction between the two accounts of creation in chapters 1 and 2.
5. Give the details of the creation of man in chapter 2.
6. Give the chapter and verse of the earliest promise of the Redeemer.
7. Give the rough analysis of chapters 5-9.
8. Give the two words which distinguish chapters 10 and 11.
9. Give the general direction of the emigration of the three sons of Noah.
10. Give the name of the Son who was the ancestor of Jesus Christ.

It will help very much in the retention of these facts in the memory, if you keep a note-book of the lessons, and write out for yourself the outlines in every case, and then these questions and answers. If you are really in earnest, and can possibly find time to do this it will work wonders in the end.

Did These Things Occur?

And now another matter before we take up the new lesson. These opening chapters of Genesis are historical, but the events are so far away that some people think they never really occurred, and that they are only myths and legends. To offset this foolish wisdom of the nineteenth century, God has been sending some of His servants with pickaxes and spades to dig up the old buried cities of Bible lands, and let men see what their excavated records have to testify about the truth of these things. These records include rock inscriptions found sometimes on high roads and sometimes on the faces of great mountains, also inscriptions on the walls and columns of famous temples, funereal tablets like slabs in our own cemeteries, papyrus rolls taken from great libraries, coins, seals, pottery, etc. Learned men have interpreted these inscriptions at great pains and with much cost of time and money, and the results of their researches are given in more books than there is space to mention. But I have recently come across one book entitled, "Modern Discoveries and the Bible," by John Urquhart, which gives a condensed story of these researches for busy people to read, and those who do not profess to be scholars, and which many of you would find valuable and interesting in the extreme. You will thus obtain corroborative testimony to a primeval revelation, the Mosaic account of creation, the fall of man, the deluge, the dispersion of the nations, and the facts in the lives of the patriarchs about which we are now to study, that will be as surprising as it is confirmatory to faith. The author referred to very truly says: "There never was an age which has contributed so much to confirm faith in the absolute accuracy of the Word of God. The conflict over the Bible has largely ceased to be a conflict between faith and unbelief; it is fast becoming a struggle between science and a vain-glorious scholasticism, and the end is not yet."

The Word Outline.

Now for our lesson. What is the next great fact in Genesis after the dispersion of the nations? At once you reply, "The call of Abraham." Right, but suppose we simply say, "Abraham," including in the name the whole story of his life that follows and which we will analyze in a moment. If then "Abraham" states in a word the fifth great fact in Genesis, what is the sixth? Whose life follows his constituting the limit of our present lesson? Isaac? Let us then write down one word outline of Genesis 1-28, like this:

Creation.
Fall.
Deluge.
Nations.
Abraham.
Isaac.

The History of Abraham.

In lesson number one we first thought out and stated the great outline facts one by one, and then went over them again to see whether as the result of our synthetic reading they would naturally recall the secondary facts that were grouped around them. We will do this with our present fact, Abraham. Can you recall the leading circumstances in his life that are called up by his name? Put them down on a piece of paper before you look at what follows, and then compare results. We have first, his call into Canaan which naturally includes his answer thereto and entrance thereupon, 12:1-9; (2), his sojourn in Egypt, together with what happened there, 12:10-20; (3), his separation from Lot including his subsequent deliverance of the latter from his foes, 13-14; (4), his reception of the covenant and justification by faith, 15; (5), his concubinage with Hagar, 16; (6), his circumcision of his household as a sign of the covenant, 17; (7), his intercession for Sodom, 18; (8), his sojourn at Gerar, 20; (9), his blessing in the birth of Isaac, 21; (10), his sacrifice of Isaac, 22; (11), his choice of a bride for Isaac, 24; (12), his offspring by Keturah, 25; (13), his death, 25. For the sake of greater clearness and brevity, shall we arrange the facts thus?—

1. Call.
2. Egypt.
3. Lot.
4. Covenant.

5. Hagar.
6. Circumcision.
7. Sodom.
8. Gerar.
9. Isaac.
10. Keturah.
11. Death.

Notice, that the call of Abraham and the nation of Israel of which he was the founder, was for purposes of blessing not upon him or them alone, but through them upon the whole world. In the last lesson we saw all mankind practically turning their backs upon God as before the flood. They had forgotten Him, and His truth and Name were likely to be lost to humanity. Israel, through Abraham, is chosen as a repository of His truth, and a channel through which the promised seed of the woman, the Redeemer of the world, could be born and identified when He came. Definite views about this will prevent our charging God with partiality, they will aid us the more to appreciate His grace, and give us a better estimate of the regard we should have for the race thus highly honored by God, and which has been made so useful to us.

Notice particularly Abraham's dealings with Melchisedec in the light of what we read of him as a type of Christ in Psalms 110, and Hebrews 7.

Notice the ground on which Abraham was accounted righteous, and compare carefully the New Testament teaching on the subject in Romans 4.

Notice that the word LORD in chapter 18 is printed in small caps indicating that the original is Jehovah. One of the three who there appeared to Abraham was He. But as we gather from a study of other portions of the Bible it is the Second Person of the Trinity who thus in the Old Testament appears to men, Jehovah-Jesus. These appearances are sometimes spoken of as "Theophanies" or "Christophanies," manifestations of God or of Christ.

Notice the remarkable illustration of the doctrine of substitution we have in the ram offered in the stead of Isaac, and how Abraham seemed by faith to anticipate such a substitute in the reply to his son, "God will provide Himself a lamb for a burnt-offering."

How to Prepare Bible Readings.

Now we know the facts in Abraham's life, what shall we do with them? This suggests another line of benefit it is hoped these lessons will subserve. The teacher keeps continually in mind that he is seeking to aid other teachers, those who are called into the public service of God in various ways, and have Bible readings and religious addresses to prepare. They need to be put in possession of material to use, and also assisted in the way to use it, and this class hopes to furnish such aid. Biographical subjects are always interesting, and if we were about to give a Bible reading or address on Abraham, the first thing to do would be to rehearse the story of his life just as we have done, only a little more at length. It would not be very difficult for one to keep the dozen great facts of his life in mind, and state them in such a way as to hold the attention of an audience. The next thing is to show what these facts suggest either as to the character of the man, or the character of God in dealing with him, or both. And finally, apply their practical teachings to the different classes of hearers. "Yes, but how shall I go to work to do this?"

First, write down the facts on a sheet of paper, put equal marks against each one of them, and then think and lift up your heart to the Holy Spirit for help. What does his "call" suggest as to his character? Obedience, growing out of faith. What does his experience in Egypt suggest? Fear growing out of unbelief. His dealings with Lot? Unselfishness, and generosity and personal courage. Follow this process through the whole list, and then on another sheet of paper place a summary of his good points and bad points in two parallel columns like this:

Good.	Bad.
Faith.	Fear.
Obedience.	Falsehood.
Unselfishness.	Unbelief.
Courage.	
Sympathy.	

You will thus find that his good points outbalance his bad ones, and will be curious to know the secret of strength and weakness in each case. But with these two lists before you it will not be difficult to see that the secret of one was faith and the other unbelief. Every good feature in Abraham's life was the direct result of his faith in God, and every bad feature equally the direct result of unbelief. This corroborates what Paul says by the Holy Ghost, in Romans 4:20. And now when you have gotten this far, can you not easily go on to make the application? Oh, I hope every member of this class will begin thus to use the Word of God in preaching to other souls somewhere, and thus pass along the blessing and hasten the kingdom of God.

Isaac a Type of Christ.

We will now analyze the second great fact in our lesson suggested by the name Isaac. But for the sake of variety let us adopt another plan. Isaac has sometimes been called a type of Christ, and there are many points of similarity in the lives of the two. Shall we then carefully recall the different incidents we have read about him, and as each one comes into mind, consider if in any way it suggests the Person or work of our Lord?

Singularly enough, the first fact in Isaac's life is his name. Unlike most of

vis he was named before he was born. Who gave him his name, and what does it suggest as to Jesus Christ? Compare Genesis 17:19 with Mathew 1:21. What is the meaning of his name? See the margin of your Bible, and compare it with Luke 2:10. The next fact is his birth. What similarity impresses you? It was a supernatural birth, and also a predicted birth. Compare chapter 17:17, with Luke 1:30-35, and 17:16 with Acts 10:43. The next fact is his sacrifice, because although he did not actually die, yet in the mind and intent of his father he was really offered on the altar. And what are the features of his sacrifice that bear a likeness to Jesus Christ? These suggest themselves to me, and others may come to you; for example, he was offered by his father, he was an only son, compare John 3:16, and he voluntarily submitted himself, see Isaiah 53:7, Hebrews 10:5-7, etc. His restoration to life suggests Jesus' resurrection and ascension, while his marriage with Rebecca is a striking type of the union of Christ and His church. These particulars will fasten themselves on your minds with reference to this latter incident. His bride was selected by his father, compare such passages as John 6:44, and Ephesians 1:3-4; the invitation, or offer of marriage was brought to her by a third person, the steward or messenger of Abraham, representing the work of the Holy Spirit in testifying of Christ, see John 15:26, and 16:13-15. Isaac's going out to meet his bride and bringing her into his mother's Sarah's tent, is emblematical of Christ coming out from Heaven to meet the church, and the rapture of the latter in entering with Him into millennial glory, as we find in such places as John 14:1-3, and 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18.

Order is very important in thinking out facts in this way, and your particular attention is called to the point that we began at the beginning in the history of Isaac as we did in the case of Abraham, and traced his career along consecutively as far as we went. Observance of this method will make such work very easy after a while, it will greatly aid your memory, as well as add interest and power to your public utterances. And now to emphasize it further, let us arrange in a single column what we have ascertained about Isaac as a type of Christ. He is a type,—

1. In his name.
   a. Its origin.
   b. Its meaning.
2. In his birth.
   a. Predicted.
   b. Supernatural.
3. In his sacrifice.
   a. By his father.
   b. An only son.
   c. A willing spirit.
4. In his restoration.
5. In his marriage.
   a. The choice of the bride.
   b. The invitation to the bride.
   c. The meeting with the bride.

How easy these facts are to remember when you thus picture them out to the eye! Tell the simple story of Isaac's life, indicate these points of similarity to Christ, establish them by the New Testament passages referred to, apply them in a few earnest, loving words energized by the Spirit of God through prayer, and you have as good a Gospel sermon as anybody need want to hear and which God will surely bless. Is this not the kind of preaching the soul needs?

We will not pursue the story of Isaac further, as some of the later facts in his life will be referred to in the next lesson, but let us

Notice how the Holy Spirit applies that part of his history in which he first comes into relation with Ishmael, in Galatians 4:21-31. Some very helpful thoughts on the subject will be found in C. H. M.'s Notes on Genesis, chapter 21, in which he shows how perfectly it illustrates the truth of the two natures in the Christian believer. These "Notes" on the whole of the Pentateuch will be a great blessing to any who will read them. While not very critical they are nevertheless deeply spiritual.

Notice the incidental evidence to the truth of the Bible narrative in that it spreads before us the sins of God's people as well as their virtues. Abraham and Isaac were sinners saved by grace. This is comforting to us as well as glorifying to God.

Notice that when it reads "God did tempt Abraham," i. e., to offer Isaac, it simply means that God tried his faith, tested it. He tested him to see whether his love toward Him was all-including, or whether he loved his son more. And this was a great honor to Abraham. As C. H. M. says, "We never read that the Lord did tempt Lot; no, Sodom (or Satan) tempted Lot," and tempted him, we may add, with a different motive and purpose.

Notice the employment of this act of Abraham by the Apostle James, 2:20-24. This does not contradict what Paul says (Romans 4), but only supplements or explains it. Paul gives us the inward principle in Abraham, and James the outward development of it.

The Next Lesson.

The next lesson will be the final one in Genesis, and include chapters 28-50. Turn back to the introductory lesson and review the rules for reading. These rules are to be observed except that after the first reading of the new lesson, you may in the subsequent readings omit chapters 34, 36, 38 and 46, as not vital to the continuity of the story. Part of the work of the class in the next lesson will be to review the whole book with reference to certain general truths it contains not dwelt upon as we have gone along.

May God make you faithful in the reading of His Word.

Jan. 26

Questions.

1. What is the word outline of Genesis 1-28?
2. What are the eleven great facts in the life of Abraham?
3. What do they illustrate as to the secret of his weakness and power?
4. What five particulars mark the similarity between the lives of Isaac and Jesus Christ?

The New Lesson.

If "Isaac" is the sixth great fact in Genesis what is the seventh? Jacob? And the eighth? Joseph? Just add then these two names to the word outline of the last lesson, and you will discover that the whole of this long book can be easily kept in mind in eight words. I mean as to its great leading facts, of course. How this simplifies Bible study, and stimulates us to go on from book to book!

The History of Jacob.

Now please recall the great facts in the life of the patriarch Jacob as in the previous cases, and put them down somewhat like this:—(It will help you very much to write them from memory with your own hand. Just school yourself to do this. After a while it will come easy, and greatly stimulate your interest in the study.)

1. Birth, 25.
2. Purchase of the birthright, 25.
3. Deception of his father, 27.
4. Flight to Haran, 28.
5. Marriage and prosperity, 29-30.
6. Return to Canaan, 31-35.

It will not be difficult to hold these six details in memory, and if you have read the chapters as requested the minor matters can also be recalled. For example, ask yourself these questions:—Who, besides Jacob, was responsible for fact number three? What was the chief event in fact number four? How was Jacob himself wronged in fact number five? What four events give the chief interest to fact number six?

What We May Learn from Jacob.

Jacob is not the least interesting of the patriarchs. While not so grand as Abraham or docile as Isaac, he is more like the average man, and that makes his life-story full of peculiar meaning to us.

Notice how it illustrates the sovereignty of God. Compare Malachi 1:1-4, and Romans 9:10-13. But let us not charge God foolishly in this case. Remember that the choice as between Jacob and Esau did not necessarily terminate on their Heavenly life, but earthly life. It was a question simply of the earthly birthright. Both may be in Heaven for aught we know. Nor did Esau suffer anything serious so far as temporalities were concerned. He was also blessed, and led the kind of life he doubtless enjoyed. Nor was God merely arbitrary in His choice and acting without moral reasons. On the contrary what He did greatly magnified His grace, and when rightly viewed, contributes to the hope and comfort of poor lost sinners such as we all are. The word "hate" as applied to Esau in the passages compared, must not be taken in the common sense of that term, but only as a Hebrew idiom intensifying the idea of choice. We shall have occasion to look into this farther when we reach the Scriptures referred to.

Notice how it illustrates the grace of God. Here is rich material for a Bible reading. Think of the love that chose such a man, bore with him, prospered, protected, and guided him, revealed God to him, and sanctified him. The Almighty sometimes speaks of Himself as "The God of Jacob," and is there any title that goes very much deeper in sounding the depths of His condescension and willingness to bless! And His grace is brought out all the stronger by Jacob's plotting and scheming to get that which God had promised him, and would have given Him without it.

Notice how it illustrates prevailing prayer. Its secret is not strength but weakness. Jacob was not wrestling with some one, but Some One was wrestling with him. God was bringing him to see what a poor, worthless creature he was in himself. As C. H. M. says, it was not until the seat of his strength was touched, his thigh put out of joint, that he learned to say, "I will not let Thee go."

The new era in his history began then. Up until that time he had held fast by his own plans and schemes, but after that he was ready to hold fast by God. Now he receives the name "Israel," one who has prevailed with God.

Joseph a Type of Christ.

There are many points of similarity between Joseph and Christ, and as in the previous lesson it will be found fruitful to trace the parallel. Consider the meaning of his name as indicated in the margin references of your Bible, 30:24, i. e., "Adding," or increase, or fruitfulness, and compare Isaiah 9:6-7, Luke 1:31-33, John 3:30. Consider the effect of his birth upon Rachel, taking away her reproach, 30:24, and ask yourself in what particulars Christ hath taken away reproach? He took away the reproach of sin, did He not? See Colossians 2:13-15, Romans 8:1. And also the reproach of the law, see Isaiah 42:21, for He fulfilled it and kept it, and in so doing showed it to be holy and good and true, notwithstanding that men, through sin, had contemned and trampled it under foot. What is the next great fact in Joseph's life suggesting a likeness to Christ? The peculiar love of his father for him, suggesting Proverbs 8:30, Isaiah 42:1, Matthew 3:17. And the next fact? The sufferings endured through the hatred of his brethren, including the sale into slavery, im-

prisonment in Egypt, etc., bringing into mind Psalm 69:4, and John 15:25. And the next fact? His deliverance from prison and exaltation to the throne of Pharoah, as foreshadowing in some degree Christ's resurrection and ascension into glory, compare Acts 2:22-24. And the next fact? His marriage to a stranger, as indicating Christ taking to Himself the church to be His bride, composed of both Jews and Gentiles, and sharing with Him at once both His rejection and His glory, compare Ephesians 1:3-4, 2:4-7, 3:1-6, 5:24, 32. And the last fact? His interview with, and revelation of himself to his brethren, beautifully typical of Christ's dealings with Israel in the latter day, see Zechariah 12:10, 13:1, and many other places.

Gather these facts into orderly shape, and a most helpful and stimulating Bible reading will spring into life under your hands. Keep up the plan already indicated of writing out the ideas with your own hand, and in a form that will best aid you to remember them. For example, thus:—Joseph a type of Christ.

1. In the name he received. ("Adding, increase.")
2. In the effect of his birth. ("Reproach.")
3. In the love of his father.
4. In the sufferings he endured.
   a. hated.
   b. sold.
   c. falsely accused.
   d. punished.
5. In the exaltation to power.
6. In the marriage with an Egyptian.
7. In the interview with his brethren.

The Prophecies of Christ.

Having now finished the word outline of the book, let us go over it again for the purpose of bringing into one view its Messianic references, and at the same time fastening the details still firmer in mind. What prophecies of Christ does Genesis contain? In answering the question, you are not called upon to read the book again, but only mentally review the facts already emphasized. Recall the eight words of the outline. Dwell on each one sufficiently long to refresh your recollection as to its details. Take the word "Creation," which covers chapters 1 and 2. As you think over the work of the six days in chapter 1, and the fuller account of the creation of man in chapter 2, no prophecy occurs to you. But when you come to the next word, "Fall," instantly "the seed of the woman," chapter 3:15, flashes into your mind. Pursue the thread through the other words, "Deluge," "Nations," "Abraham," and there again you meet such a prophecy in chapters 12:7, and 17:7, compared with Galatians 3:16. In the same way, "Isaac" yields nothing, but "Jacob" in the blessing on his sons, refers to the Coming One in chapter 49:10. Observe in this connection the development of Messianic truth. At first He is the seed of the woman simply, rather indefinite and undetermined; in the second place, the range is narrowed to a particular race of the woman, the line of Abraham; and in the third place, the line is drawn still closer to include only the tribe of Judah. Thus will it be found as we proceed, that the features of the Savior's personality become more and more clearly indicated and defined by the various prophets, not only stimulating expectation with every generation, but increasing the means by which He may be identified when He comes.

The Human Types of Christ.

I would now suggest that we again run over the eight words of the outline in order to gather together the human types of Christ. Under the word "Creation," Adam suggests himself, for whose typical relation to Christ see such places as Romans 5:12-21, and 1 Corinthians 15:21-22, 45-49. Under the word "Deluge" we think of Noah, whose typical relation is somewhat weaker, except as we think of him in the light of a preacher of righteousness to a gainsaying generation. Under the word "Abraham" we have already spoken of Melchisedec. Add to these Isaac and Joseph, whose histories have been treated somewhat at length, and we have the principal characters who are referred to in this typical connection, although their number might be multiplied.

The General Types of Christ.

I would ask you to go over the eight words a third time in the same way, to ascertain the general types of Christ as distinguished from the human. For example, under the word "Creation," we at once think of Light as such a type, compare John 9:5. Under the "Fall," we think of the coats of skins previously spoken of. "Deluge" suggests the ark as a type of Christ in whom we are saved, Acts 4:12. The word "Abraham" brings to mind the ram caught in the thicket. "Jacob," the ladder to which Christ Himself refers, John 1:51. These then are the chief Messianic references:—

Prophecies.

The seed of the woman.
The seed of Abraham.
The seed of Judah.

HUMAN TYPES.	GENERAL TYPES.
Adam.	Light.
Noah.	Coat of skins.
Melchisedec.	Ark.
Isaac.	Ram.
Jacob.	Ladder.

The Next Lesson.

The next lesson will be Exodus, chapters 1-19, which please read very carefully according to the simple directions prescribed in the "Introduction," see issue of October 5th.

Feb 1.

AS heretofore let us begin with a review:—

1. Give the word outline of Genesis (the eight words).

2. Give the six great facts in Jacob's life.

3. Give the points of likeness between Joseph's history and that of Christ.

4. Give the prophecies of Christ, titles and chapters.

5. Give the human types of Christ.

6. Give the general types of Christ.

Genesis has sometimes been called the Book of Beginnings, which is the real meaning of the word, because of the nature of its contents, which give the origin of things. We have in it the beginning of the world, of man, of the Sabbath, marriage, sin, prophecy, and sacrifice, as well as the beginning of the nations and Israel. This brings us down to the twelfth chapter, but after that practically there are no beginnings, but only a recurrence of what has gone before.

Exodus in the same way has sometimes been called the Book of the Departure or the Going Out, from the etymology of the word, and also because it gives the history of the departure of the Israelites from Egypt.

The Israelites entered Egypt when Joseph was in power, seventy souls in all, (Genesis 46:27). They left there 215 years afterward, according to the chronology in the margin of our Bibles, when their men of war alone numbered 603,550, not counting women and children, not counting men under 20, and also leaving out of consideration the whole tribe of Levi (Numbers 1:44-50). During this period their experiences had varied. While Joseph lived, and the Pharoahs of that period, they were happy and prosperous in the land of Goshen. But by-and-by a change of dynasty occurred, and political revolution took place, and the new government viewed their increasing numbers and influence with alarm and jealousy. In consequence they began to subject them in every possible way, and it is at this point in their history the book of Exodus begins (chapter 1:7-10.)

Proof from Recent Explorations.

Allusion was made in an earlier lesson to the way in which recent explorations in Bible lands throw light upon these historical statements in the Word of God, and this is particularly true of the present period. "It would be easy," says an authority on the subject, "to multiply illustrations from the ancient records of Egypt of many circumstances in the life of Joseph." There is an Egyptian tale of "The Two Brothers," which suggests the story of Joseph's temptation, and there is an inscription on a certain tomb which brings to mind the period of famine. The situation and limits of the land of Goshen are now known, as well as the history of the dynastic changes that resulted in the exodus of the Hebrews. It is ascertained that Rameses II., the Pharaoh of Moses' time, was like his predecessor, a great builder, corroborating chapter 1:11. His mummy has recently been discovered, as well as that of his daughter, the Princess who saved the infant Moses from perishing in the river Nile, and brought him up as her own son. How near these circumstances seem to bring the history of that time, and how real it is made to appear!

In like manner, careful examinations have now "put the route of the exodus beyond all reasonable doubt." We know also the real character of the desert through which the Hebrews passed. Shur is a rolling plain where shrubs and herbs give pasturage to cattle. Water courses cross it. Charming spots like Elim are found here and there, indicating how they found sustenance during that period. There is a plain at the foot of Sinai now called Er-Rahah, two miles long, and half a mile wide, where a multitude of 2,000,000 souls could easily have assembled, and the sights and sounds described could easily have been seen and heard by all. The site of Kadesh-Barnea too is now definitely settled. Thus, without going further into detail, is the accuracy of the story we are about to consider wonderfully confirmed. These hints are taken from a compact little volume entitled, "Recent Explorations in Bible Lands," by Rev. T. Nicol, D. D., of Edinburgh, which is quite inexpensive, and can be read in two or three hours. It is especially valuable also as containing references to the larger and completer volumes on the subject, for those whose interest should be quickened to pursue the study.

The Facts of the Lesson.

We are now ready to consider the facts of the lesson, which will be brought before us in a series of questions. The first great fact is clearly suggested by the one word, "Bondage." But what were the sub-facts that entered into this bondage, what are its elements referred to in the text? Were there not chiefly two, their rigorous service under the hard task-masters, and the decree for the destruction of male issue ?

What is the next fact? The birth of Moses. But that naturally includes the further facts of his life to the time when he has fled from Egypt and Pharaoh's palace.

The third fact? His call, including the story of the burning bush, the revelation to him of Jehovah, his hesitancy to respond, and the collaboration of Aaron.

The fourth fact is the story of the plagues, including what led up to them in the return to Egypt, the demand on Pharaoh, and his obduracy.

The fifth fact is the Passover, growing out really from the last plague, the sixth

is the crossing of the Red Sea, the seventh, the entrance upon the wilderness journey.

This last fact might be subdivided for convenience by the number of places at which they stopped. Try to recall them, and the circumstances occurring at each. You will be aided here as in the instance of the dispersion of the nations, by consulting the map in the back of your Bible. It is described as the "Peninsula of Sinai." Observe Marah, and why it was so called. Elim. Rephidim. What great miracle occurred after leaving Elim, and in the neighborhood of Rephidim? What miracle at the last-named locality? What battle was fought there? Who commanded the forces? What was done to relieve Moses of care? At whose suggestion?

Perhaps we had better make a separate fact of their arrival at Sinai. Whither is Moses now called? What distinction does Jehovah bestow on Israel? (19:5-6). Describe what was seen and heard on and about the mount.

The Word Outline.

Let us now gather up these facts as on previous occasions by forming them into a word outline:—

1. Bondage, 1.
   - a. taskmasters.
   - b. male children.
2. Birth of Moses, 2.
   - a. ark of bulrushes.
   - b. Pharaoh's palace.
3. Call of Moses, 3-4.
   - a. slaying Egyptian.
   - b. shepherd in Midian.
   - c. burning bush.
4. Plagues, 5-11.
   - a. Pharaoh hardened.
   - b. sorcerers defeated.
5. Passover, 12.
   - a. ordinance instituted.
   - b. death of first-born.
   - c. departure.
6. Red Sea, 13-15.
   - a. sacrificing first-born.
   - b. Egyptians drowned.
   - c. song of victory.
7. Wilderness, 16-18.
   - a. Marah.
   - b. Elim.
   - c. Rephidim.
     - (1). manna.
     - (2). rock.
     - (3). rulers.
     - (4). Amalek.
8. Sinai, 19.

Things to be Explained.

The class understands that interpretation and explanation are not among the things promised in these lessons for many reasons, but that does not exclude all allusion thereto if necessity seems to compel and space permit. For example, 4;24, and the following verses, may puzzle many who have no commentary at hand to examine. The idea there seems to be that some great mental distress or physical illness came upon Moses which he recognized as a chastisement for the neglect of the circumcision of his son. This neglect perhaps was occasioned by his wife's aversion to the act, who now overcame her maternal feelings sufficiently to perform it herself, and thus bring relief to her husband. This critical experience was doubtless not only of value to Moses' own inner life, but had its influence upon him as the leader of and legislator for Israel in after years. Especially would it stir him to enforce the law of circumcision which was so peculiarly the mark of distinction for that people.

The hardening of Pharaoh's heart, 1:3, and other places, is apt to be a stumbling-block to some, but it must be remembered that the Divine messages and judgments were not the cause but only the occasion of that hardening. Such passages must be interpreted in the light of the Divine character and the Holy Scriptures taken as a whole, and we know therefrom that God never deals unjustly or arbitrarily with His creatures, whose own free actings are always the cause of their downfall and punishment. (Compare 2 Thessalonians 2:11-12).

The borrowing of the Egyptian jewels by the Israelites has given rise to questioning, but the word "borrow" in that instance means to demand or require. The Israelites who had been kept in great poverty, and denied their just wages by their persecutors, now insisted upon full remuneration for their labor which was thus paid in silver articles adapted for convenient carriage, The dread of them inspired in the Egyptians by Jehovah made it comparatively easy to obtain what they asked. Compare Genesis 15:13-14; Psalm 105:37; Ezekiel 39:10.

Chapter 12:40 present a difficulty where the period of their sojourn is given as 430 years, while as we have seen the Bible chronology calls for only 215 years spent in Egypt. Galatians 3:16-17, throws some light upon it as showing that the period began to be reckoned from the date of the promise to Abraham, which makes precisely 430 years. As bearing upon this the Septuagint (Greek) translation of the Old Testament, makes that verse read, "The sojourning of the children and of their fathers, which they sojourned in the land of Canaan and in the land of Egypt."

Things to be Noticed.

In all the lessons thus far the attention of the class has been called to certain special features which it were well to particularly notice by way of suggestion, even though their explanation were not called for. In the present instance the promptings of faith on the part of Moses' parents as well as himself should be dwelt upon. Compare Hebrews 11:23-29. There was nothing hap-hazard either in

the hiding of the babe in the Nile nor in his own renunciation of Egypt afterward. The whole thing was profoundly religious and born of the same undoubting belief in God that justified Abraham.

Notice again the command for Moses to write certain things in a book, 17:14, 34:27. This has an important application to the theory of some that Moses is not the author of the Pentateuch or the first five books of the Bible. If you carefully observe the number of times in which he is said to write this or that, or in which the statement is made that the Lord spoke directly to him, you will perceive that to remove those passages from the Pentateuch would be to leave little as a remainder. The inference is very plain—to plain people.

Notice too the typical character of the Passover. The Passover itself is a remarkable type of redemption through Christ, while the central feature of the Passover, the lamb, is equally impressive as symbolizing Christ Himself (1 Corinthians 5:7-8). We shall enlarge upon this later.

Notice finally, certain important particulars about the miraculous plagues. There are two kinds of miracles, absolute and providential. The latter are those which are not miraculous in themselves, but in the circumstances attending their performance. Such were the plagues of Egypt. They were the natural phenomena of that land, only in this instance they came at an unusual season and in an unusual degree of intensity, as well as in immediate response to the prophet's command. The Nile which was turned into blood was the patron God of the Egyptians, a fact which greatly added to their humiliation in that circumstance. The same thing was true in some measure of several of the other plagues, one of their gods, for example, was represented with a frog's head, they also worshipped flies, reared temples in honor of the ox and the cow, and idolized the sun which was turned into darkness. Observe the reference to the magicians in this case found in 2 Timothy 3:8. That they represented Satan as Moses represented God, there can be little doubt. Their defeat under the circumstances was an impressive illustration of the supremacy of the latter, which they themselves acknowledged, 8:16-19. While they appeared by their enchantments to be able to reproduce two of the plagues on a small scale, it is notable that they attempted to go no further, and that even in those instances they could not undo what they had done as in the case of Moses.

The Passover a Type of Redemption.

Our next lesson will deal with the types more particularly, but we shall avail ourselves of the present opportunity to dwell on the one most distinctive and comprehensive type of redemption found in the Old Testament. What are the points of similarity that suggest themselves? Be careful to begin at the beginning, and school yourself to think orderly and logically throughout. We may differ as to what constitutes the beginning here, but it strikes me that the need of the Passover is the first thing. What was its need? The condition of the people, their bondage and suffering. The analogy between their condition and that of the sinner in bondage to sin, Satan and death, and the suffering entailed, is not difficult to trace. What then is the next thought? The origin of the Passover. It originated in God, in His mercy and purpose to deliver. Its revelation as well as inception was Divine, bringing to mind the fact that we are not only indebted to God's grace for our deliverance from sin, but for the inspired Word and authenticated messengers through which the same has been ministered to us. The next thought might be the means of the Passover with all the suggestiveness of the slaying of the lamb and the sprinkling of its blood, as brought before us in New Testament teaching in 1 Corinthians 5:7-8, Romans 3:24-26, 1 Peter 1:18-20, and other places. Another thought might be the effects of the Passover, seen to be at least three-fold, e. g., salvation from death, deliverance from bondage, and entrance into Canaan, symbolizing at once salvation both from the guilt and power of sin, and rest in the fullness of Christ. And then there is a final thought in the application of the matter, since the effects or blessings of the Passover were for all who believed and obeyed God in making the necessary provisions in the slain lamb and sprinkled blood, without reference either to the question of character or the degree or quality of faith. The New Testament Scriptures which form the parallel to this are of course very numerous and familiar. "Whosoever believeth," "Whosoever will may come," "Not by works of righteousness which we have done," etc. For such places as these consult the marginal references in your Bibles or Cruden's Complete Concordance. The last-named book should, if possible, be owned and used by every member of this class.

Shall we now arrange our outline of the Bible reading on the Passover? In what particulars is it a type of redemption?

1. In its need.
   a. bondage.
   b. suffering.
   c. death.
2. In its origin. (Divine).
3. In its means. (Blood of the Lamb).
4. In its effects.
   a. salvation from death.
   b. deliverance from bondage.
   c. entrance into rest.
5. In its application. (Faith).

It is not necessary to suppose that the above is an exhaustive or even the best outline of the theme that might be attempted, but if it will aid any to think for themselves, and begin to use it for God's glory it will be well.

The Next Lesson.

The next lesson will be the conclusion of Exodus, i. e., chapters 20-40. After the first reading, however, the following chapters may, if you choose, be omitted for reasons which will be apparent, viz.:—21, 22, 23, and 35 to 39 inclusive.

Feb 8

FIRST a review:

1. Give the secondary name for Genesis, and its meaning.

2. Give the secondary name for Exodus.

3. Explain the apparent chronological discrepancy between the marginal dates and chapter 12:40.

4. Indicate some of the proofs of historicity from recent explorations.

5. Give the word outline (eight facts).

6. What were the two elements of their bondage?

7. What indicates the limitations of the Egyptian sorcerers?

8. What is the chapter of the Passover?

9. Name the three places of the wilderness journey before Sinai.

10. What four events occurred at, or near, Rephidim?

11. What proof can you give that Moses was the author of this book?

12. Name at least five points of likeness between the Passover and our redemption through Christ.

There were two further observations on the subject-matter of the last lesson I would like to have made had it not been already somewhat extended. The first was the "difference" which God put between the Egyptians and Israel, 11:7. Notice that it was the difference between "life" and "death," and its determining point was the sprinkled blood of the lamb. Teachers who are conducting classes will, it is hoped, seize upon such opportunities to illustrate and emphasize the distinction between the saved and the unsaved as based on faith in the atonement of Jesus Christ.

The second observation refers to "the beginning of months," 12:1-2. This is interesting not only as bearing on the fact that the Jews have a religious as well as a civil year, the one beginning in the spring (March-April), and the other in the autumn (September-October), but also as showing that their deliverance from Egypt marked a new era in their history. Henceforth in their relations to Jehovah, the past was to be regarded as a blank. The suggestion is obvious that "redemption is the first step in real life." As another expresses it, "A man's life is really of no account till he begins to walk with God in the knowledge of salvation and settled peace through the blood of Christ." It is then only he begins to "see life," and possess happiness, 1 John 5:12, Psalm 32:1. Let us not fail to impress these spiritual truths when we may. These lessons can not refer to them often for apparent reasons, but my prayer is that as we proceed the Holy Spirit Himself will take of these things of Christ and show them unto you, John 16:14.

The New Lesson.

You have already recalled that the last word in the Word Outline of the previous lesson was "Sinai." Now what occurred at Sinai? It is easy to reply that there the Israelites received the revelation of the law, the tabernacle and the priesthood. There were two other events, for example, the idolatry of the golden calf, and the building of the tabernacle, after its pattern had been shown to Moses in the Mount. Nevertheless, the first three mentioned constitute the outline, which you might place on your note-book under the eight facts of the last lesson, so as to read thus:

8. Sinai.
   a. law, 20-24.
   b. tabernacle, 25-27, 30-31.
   c. priesthood, 28-29.

Let us analyze a little what is found under the word "Law." Observe that we have here a remote application of "the law of recurrence" hitherto explained. That is, we have first, the law in general as set forth in the ten commandments, 20:1-17, and then in detail in what follows to the close of 24. In the first, God lays down certain fundamental principles, so to speak, and in the second, shows certain applications of those principles to ordinary, everyday life. It might be illustrated, perhaps, by the distinction between the constitution of a state, and the enactments of its legislators from year to year, the latter in a sense growing out of the former.

Notice, the frequent allusions to the fourth commandment. Since the original institution of the Sabbath, Genesis 2, it has been referred to at least five or six times. No wide-awake teacher will fail to make much of that in a time when that hallowed day is being so sadly neglected. Observe the reason for the keeping of this day as stated, 23:12. How much in these hurried times we need to be "refreshed" in body, and mind and soul! How foolish the man who fails to hallow the Sabbath!

Notice the revelation of the character of God afforded in the law. His condescension is seen in occupying Himself with the details of daily life, the death of an ox, the loan of a garment, the loss of a tooth. What a motive for holiness, what a source of comfort this affords! His justice is seen in the even balance held between the rich and the poor, the punishment for bribery, defalcation, etc., penalty on the guilty and protection for the innocent. Remember in the same connection that this is the law which will maintain in the Millennium about which we are to study later on. God has doubtless given this law to be obeyed by all men on the earth, and His purpose in that matter will not ultimately be defeated.

Notice the revelation of the character of man afforded in the law. The fact that such law must be enacted shows that such crimes will be committed. He is right who says that the most refined member of the human family carries about in his bosom the seeds of the darkest and most horrifying abominations.

Compare Romans 2:1; 3:23, Mark 14:18-19.

Notice particularly the place the law is said to occupy in the scheme of redemption, Galatians 3:24. It brings us to Christ in the sense that it shows us what sin is in God's sight, how far off we are from being what God requires, and how absolutely essential is a Savior of God's providing.

The Tabernacle.

The Divine sense of the importance of the revelation of the tabernacle is seen in the preparation for it, 24:15-18. Let the subject receive the most prayerful attention. Carefully note each article referred to, and to aid in a clear conception of each, write its name with your own hand in the order in which you reach it in the record. Beginning with chapter 24, what four articles of furniture are mentioned in succession? At chapter 26 the framework of the building is spoken of. What was the material and predominating colors of the curtains (1-6)? How many coverings were to be made and of what materials (7-14)? How were the two parts of the building proper separated, and by what names were they distinguished (31-33)? What articles were placed in the most-holy place? What in the holy place? What part of the tabernacle is spoken of in chapter 27:9-19? What specific article for the outer court is mentioned in the preceding verses of that chapter? What subject interrupts the revelation of the details of the tabernacle in chapters 28-29? In returning to the tabernacle what is its next article of furniture mentioned? In which of the three places, the most holy, the holy, or the outer court, was it to be placed? What precise position was it to occupy? What was the last article named, and in which of the three places was it to stand (30:17-21)? What provision was made for the financial support of the tabernacle service (30:11-16)? What prohibition was laid upon the people with reference to the composition of the ointments and perfume (30:22-38)? What provision did God make for the execution of His plans in the erection of the tabernacle (31:1-11)? What chapters contain the account of their execution? When were they completed (40:17)? How did God show His approval of the work (40:34)? What was to be offered on the brazen altar twice every day (29:38-39)? What kind of offering was this to be (verse 42)? How in this same verse does God indicate that He will bless the people? How is the same idea expressed in verses 45-46? I trust these questions will be slowly and carefully answered, as much in the future will depend on our acquaintance with the details of the tabernacle. Write out the divisions of the building thus:

The outer court.
The holy place.
The most holy place.
The furniture of the outer court:
The brazen altar.
The laver.
The furniture of the holy place:
The table of shew bread.
The golden candlestick.
The altar of incense.
The furniture of the most holy place:
The ark of the testimony.
The mercy seat.

It will greatly aid the student if he can examine a drawing or picture of the tabernacle and its contents. Such will be found in a good Bible dictionary, such as Smith's, which ought to be in every well-equipped private library. Then there are special books on the tabernacle treating of its typical character which are highly useful from a spiritual point of view. Some are large and expensive, but I here mention others within easy reach, such as, "The Tabernacle and Priesthood," by H. W. Saltau, "All of Blue," by Frank White, "Mosaic Institutions," by W. G. Moorehead, and "Shadow and Substance," by George C. Needham. A good illustrated lecture on the tabernacle would be a good thing for your church or Sunday-school, and I might be able to recommend one if I were addressed by you, care of the Union Gospel News.

The Tabernacle—A Type.

The deep significance of the revelation of the tabernacle doubtless lies in these two mysterious facts, (1) it was a pattern of things in the Heavens, and (2) it was to be the dwelling-place of God on earth. As to the first fact little can be known at present, but the Christian should dwell upon it in the light of the epistle to the Hebrews, especially such passages as 8:1-5, 9:11-12, 22-28, 10:11-14.

As to the second fact, God made the tabernacle His dwelling-place in the sense that His visible glory abode there (Exodus 40:34-38), and there He met the people and communed with them in the person of the high priest (25:22). But in this particular it becomes a wonderful type of the Person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ (John 1:14), in whom God dwelt among us. And not only is the tabernacle itself such a type, but every article in, and every part of the tabernacle points to Him in some particular way. For example, take the ark and mercy-seat together, the latter resting upon the former, in the one we have Christ in His life fulfilling the law on our behalf, and in the other we have Christ in His death becoming a propitiation for our sins. Here mercy and truth meet together, righteousness and peace kiss each other. It is a beautiful thought that in 1 John 2:2, the word "propitiation" is precisely the same in its meaning as the word "mercy-seat." If you will read that precious verse in that way it may reveal Jesus to you in a new light.

Coming out of the most holy into the holy place, we have the altar of incense symbolizing Christ's intercession, the

table of shewbread, representing Him as our food, and the golden candlestick as our light. In the outer court He is in the brazen altar our sacrifice for sin, and in the laver our cleanser or regenerator.

Even the different parts of the sacred building suggest Him. The "fine twined linen" of the curtains expresses His spotless manhood, the "blue," His Heavenly character, "purple," His royal position, "scarlet," His human sufferings upon the cross. Their measurements, number, couplings, loops and laches all find a significance in Him. The coverings of goats' hair, rams' skin, and badgers' skins are not without their meaning also, as will be seen by a perusal of some of the books referred to above. At first it may seem to some as if these points of suggestion were somewhat strained, if not puerile, but as one grows "in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ," he comes to recognize Him more frequently in the Word, and to rejoice in Him as the One ever in His Father's eye, and the alpha and omega of all that He has to reveal to man. One needs to be very careful, however, not to be led astray here by fanciful and unwarranted interpretations of some of these things, the only safeguard against which is constant dependence upon the teaching and guidance of the Holy Ghost.

Nor should we forget either, that the tabernacle foreshadows in some sense that blessed truth universal to the true believer, of God's indwelling in him, see 1 Corinthians 6:9, John 14:15-23. And then what shall we say of Revelation 21:2-5? Is it possible that the original Moses saw in the Mount, whose pattern he set up in the wilderness, is that which God hath prepared aforetime to be His habitation in the new earth throughout the age of eternity? Such hints as these should quicken our interest in the study of the subject of the tabernacle.

The Priesthood.

When we approach the revelation of the priesthood, perhaps the first thing that strikes us is its position, cutting in two as it does the revelation of the tabernacle. But remember that the Holy Spirit is the Author of the Word, and that He makes no blunders. Even though we do not always understand the meaning of such things, it is our duty to regard them as Divine and seek light. A very probable reason for this proceeding is suggested in C. H. M.'s "Notes on Exodus," referred to before, pages 263-265, and 289-291.

You will observe that the two chapters containing the revelation of the priesthood are naturally divided by the subjects of which they treat. What is the subject of each? Be careful to identify each of the garments, remembering that the high-priest especially is a type of Christ, and that each has a significance in its teaching concerning His work for us. After the general statement (28:4-5), the details follow to the end of that chapter. Take time to write them down.

The ephod is named first. The material, coloring, shoulder-pieces and breastplate are all significant, and particularly, of course, the names of the tribes of Israel engraven on the precious stones. "The strength of the priest's shoulder and the affection of his heart were wholly devoted to the interests of those he represented. This typified in Aaron, is actualized in Christ." The girdle is the symbol of service. "Urim and Thummim" which mean "lights and perfections," is peculiarly mysterious, but seems to be "connected with the communication of the mind of God on various questions of detail in Israel's history," see the marginal references or concordance for other places where the words are used. The application to Christ is clear who, by His Word and Holy Spirit, communicates the counsels of God to us, John 12:49-50, Acts 2:32-33. Observe the bells on the hem of the ephod and the reason for them, (verse 35). Our High Priest has passed into the Heavens, but those whose ears are chastened to the sound, have daily evidence that He ever liveth. Observe the engraving on the plate resting upon Aaron's forehead and the meaning assigned to it, (verse 38), "It shall be always upon his forehead, that they may be accepted before the Lord." Wonderful demonstration in type that Christ's holiness is ours, and that because of it God looks on us with complacency. Do not fail to observe that Aaron's sons are not forgotten, and that coats, and bonnets, and girdles and breeches are ordained for them in their particular ministry (verses 40-43). If the high priest (Aaron) typifies Christ, his sons, the priests, are regarded as typifying, first, Israel itself (19:6), and afterwards the church, (1 Peter 2:9), and, of course, every individual member of the church. These garments, therefore, may represent those qualities and graces with which the true people of God and members of Christ are endued in their own sphere for worship and service.

Reaching chapter 29, observe the preparation for the consecration of Aaron and his sons. The washing (verse 4), the anointing (verse 7), the sacrificial offerings (verses 10-18), the consecrating act (verses 19-21) etc., all of which, of course, illustrate the fundamental truths of the Gospel concerning our standing in, and relationship to Christ, and which may be treated more at length in an analytic course of Bible study to follow the present one next year. In the meantime those who can obtain and read the books hitherto enumerated will find set before them a feast of fat things.

The Types in Exodus.

Exodus, unlike Genesis, contains no distinct prophecies of Christ, but its typology in that respect as already seen, is very abundant. And there are other

types than those which apply only to the Person of Christ. As in the case of Genesis, so here, I would ask you to recall the eight words of the outline of the book, with the sub-divisions under them, for such suggestions as may come to you. For example, "Bondage" contains no type of primary importance, nor "Birth of Moses." But when we come to "Call of Moses," the burning bush comes into view. Here we are furnished with a type of Israel, which, although in the furnace of Egypt, was not consumed because God was there. It becomes in the same way, and for the same reason, the type of the church, and of the individual believer in Christ. Material for a Bible reading will be found in the treatment of such a theme. The word "Plagues," suggests no type, but the next word, "Passover," brings before us the great type of redemption already treated of, and in the paschal lamb a remarkable type of the Redeemer Himself. "Red Sea," we need not dwell upon, but the word "Wilderness," and especially "Rephidim," one of the stopping-places therein, produces at least two types of Christ, the manna and the smitten rock. When we reach the last word, "Sinai," we have the tabernacle itself, and for that matter every part of it, and every article of furniture it contains, the daily lamb spoken of in chapter 29, and the priesthood of Aaron. It is not assumed that these are all the types by any means, but the principal ones, and those upon which the church at large is generally agreed. Let us, as heretofore, arrange them in orderly fashion before the eye.

1. **The human types of Christ:**
   Moses.
   Aaron.
2. **The general types of Christ:**
   Paschal lamb.
   Manna.
   Smitten rock.
   Tabernacle.
   Daily lamb.
3. **The other types:**
   Redemption (Passover).
   Israel and the Church (the burning bush).

The Next Lesson.

The next lesson will be the whole of the book of Leviticus, except that after the first reading you may, if you desire, omit chapters 11-15 inclusive, 17-22 inclusive, 24, 26-27. Read these at least once however, and all the others in careful observance of the original rules.

Feb. 15

AS usual, let us review our last lesson very faithfully:

1. What three principal things occurred at Sinai?

2. What awful illustration of human depravity occurred there?

3. How would you explain the distinction between the decalogue and the laws following?

4. Name the three divisions of the tabernacle and the furniture in each.

5. What distinguishes the breastplate and shoulder-pieces of the ephod of the high priest?

6. What, or whom, do the priests typify?

7. Name the leading types in Exodus.

The New Lesson.

We have found a secondary name for each of the other books already studied, one which more plainly suggests to English readers the general character of its contents, and we may do the same for Leviticus. It might be called the Book of the Laws. Not Law but Laws. The Book of the Law, singular number, is a title frequently ascribed to the Pentateuch, but "The Book of the Laws" well describes the third division of the Pentateuch, because it is a Divine revelation of the laws which were to govern the priests chiefly, in their administration of the tabernacle service, and their care of the people both materially and spiritually. Remember that the latter are still at Sinai, that Leviticus was given to Moses at that place, and that it is in its nature a supplement to, really a part of, the preceding book of Exodus.

Regarding it, therefore, as a book of laws, what is the first great fact, or law, it contains? No difficulty is experienced in answering, "the law of the offerings." How many chapters are taken up with the consideration of this law? "1-7 inclusive." What is the law of the offerings? In other words, how many distinct kinds of offerings are enumerated? "Five." Name them, and write them down say, like this:

Burnt offering.
Meal offering.
Peace offering.
Sin offering.
Trespass offering.

You will observe that I have written the name of the second "Meal," in stead of meat, as being the designation given in the Revised Version, the more correct rendering of the word, and the more befitting the nature of the offering itself, which contains no meat in the sense of flesh as we now use that term.

The Significance of the Offerings.

Many offerings and sacrifices are referred to in the history of Israel, but it will simplify matters very much and save confusion, if we remember that they all fall under this law, they are always one of these five. It does not matter whether they are offered for the priest himself, the nation, a ruler of the nation, or a common person; it does not matter whether the offering is a bullock, a sheep, a goat, a turtle-dove or a pigeon, in any case it is one of these five. In the present lesson, chapter 7, reference is made to offerings for vows, and thanksgiving, and voluntary offerings, but they are simply different aspects of the one trespass offering.

It must not be supposed, of course, that these offerings in themselves satisfied God. See Hebrews 10:4. Their importance lay in what they symbolized, viz.: the Person and the work of the Lord Jesus Christ. The careful study of the offerings will do more to exalt Him in our eyes, and teach us the real character of His vicarious life and death, than any other part of the Bible. I implore the members of this class to take it up at an early opportunity. C. H. M.'s "Notes on Leviticus" will afford help, and also "Mosaic Institutions," by Moorehead, spoken of in a previous lesson. The best book, however, is entitled, "The Law of the Offerings," by Andrew Jukes. It is small and inexpensive, but fuller than any of the others. A good volume, or commentary, on the whole book of Leviticus is found in the Expositor's series, written by the late Professor S. H. Kellogg, D. D.

These offerings do not represent in every case the same aspect of Christ's Person and work, but different aspects. In the burnt and meal offerings we see His consecration, in the peace offering His communion and fellowship with God, in the sin and trespass offerings His atoning sacrifice. In all these particulars, however, it is not Christ alone who is thus seen, but we (who are believers), in Christ. Nothing will strengthen our assurance of salvation, or melt our hearts in love toward Him, or awaken our adoration of His character and grace, like an understanding of our position in Him as set before us in this wonderful revelation.

The epistle to the Hebrews is the New Testament counterpart of Leviticus, and the two books should be studied together when it comes to a question of close analysis. This is especially true of the chapters 5-10 inclusive.

The Second of the Laws.

After passing from the law of the offerings, what is the next great fact in Leviticus? "The consecration of Aaron and his sons." The law about this consecration was really given in Exodus as we saw, and in the present instance we have the first execution of that law; but to accommodate ourselves to the secondary name of the book, let us call it "The Law of Consecration." It will be observed that the details of the consecration occupy chapters 8-9, and are in accordance with the previous commands received. But when we reach chapter 10, whose

contents really belong to the present division of the book, an exception occurs.

To understand what follows in the death of Aaron's sons, notice carefully the last verse of chapter 9, which speaks of the sacrifice on the brazen altar in the outer court, and holy fire from the Lord consuming it. It was this fire, the same that consumed the sacrifice, that should have been employed in the censers to burn the incense before the Lord. Nadab and Abihu neglected this, and offered "strange fire," and were instantly slain.

This looks like a terrible punishment for a slight offence. But the offence was not slight. It was a flagrant disobedience of a plain command, several commands, in short. Not only did they disobey in the matter of the fire (see 16:12), but also it would seem, in performing an office which belonged only to their father, the high priest, for, as some think, they went into the holy of holies. Moreover, two went in where only one was permitted. Furthermore, the offence was committed at a very critical moment in the history of the people, at the very beginning of their covenant relationship to God. It suggests a somewhat similar occurrence in the opening era of the Christian church, Acts 5:1-2. In both cases a signal manifestation of the Divine displeasure was necessary for the sake of impressing the lesson upon the whole nation in the one case, and the whole church in the other. It need not be supposed, however, that this punishment involved the eternal loss of the souls of these men. That question need not be raised in this connection at all. It was a case of God's judging in the midst of His people, not a case of His actings among "them that are without." It affords a solemn warning, however, to any within the visible church who would depart in their worship from the plain revelation of God, and to any without, who would seek to approach Him in some other way than the prescribed one. John 14:6, Acts 4:12.

The Third of the Laws.

The next law will be found to include the contents of several chapters, 11-22 inclusive, omitting perhaps 16, which treats of a separate subject of much importance. The name usually given to this law (11-22), is that of "The Clean and the Unclean," and will be found to include such subjects as the creatures that may, or may not, be eaten (11), the ceremonial purification of women (12), the detection and purification of leprosy (13-14), personal uncleanness (15), the prohibition concerning blood (17), incestuous connections (18), purification of the priests (21-22), while chapters 19-20 repeat certain laws given before, doubtless for the purpose of emphasizing them, and the specific punishments attached, to them. The three main subjects of the law may be characterized as follows:

a. food,
b. disease,
c. personal habits.

Of course the apparent reason for the enunciation of these laws concerned the health and the morals of the people, and to this day, notwithstanding their imperfect obedience thereto, the Hebrews remain the healthiest and most moral of all races. But a broader reason points to the design of God to keep the nation separate from every other (20:25-26). This applies to all the laws of this book, and has a bearing on what was said in an earlier lesson as to God's purpose in calling Israel to be His special people. They were to be peculiar for the world's sake, as a source of blessing to the whole earth. Nor should it be overlooked that there is a deep spiritual and special significance to many, if not all, of these distinctions and prohibitions. Of those concerning leprosy is this particularly so. It is a striking representation of sin, and will well repay a careful study as the basis of a Bible reading on that subject.

Amid so many things to be specifically noticed, it is difficult to distinguish. But notice the allusion to these laws in Acts 10:11-16, and see how God raises the thoughts of the apostle, and through him the whole church, far above their Levitical application. See how He teaches that the true cleanness these things typified, was that accomplished through being washed in the blood of the Lamb.

Notice that class of laws which bring out the thought of God's tenderness and care, 19:9-10, compared with Ruth 2:14-16, also 19:13, compared with Psalm 70:12-14, and James 5:4. What live topics these furnish for the times in which we live, and how they indicate that the Bible is the source of the true sociology as well as soteriology! This is the book for the modern social and political reformers as well as the preacher.

Notice the teaching in chapters 21-22 concerning the priestly position, which has such a practical bearing on the standing of believers in Christ in the light of the last lesson. The sons of Aaron were priests by birth, and nothing could break that relationship. There were many things which might interfere with the full enjoyment of their privileges, but the relationship remained. The spiritually-minded student will easily see the application of this to the doctrine of assurance on the one hand, and the distinction between salvation and fellowship or communion on the other.

The Fourth of the Laws.

To return to chapter 16, what is its subject? Shall we identify it as "The Law of the Day of Atonement?" Observe when it was given, (verse 1). It seems to be recorded out of its due order, and yet there must have been some reason for it. Perhaps the preceding laws about uncleanness were made necessary just then

by the conduct of Aaron's sons in approaching the tabernacle in an unholy way. Observe that this was the only occasion when the high priest entered the holy of holies (verse 2). What change took place in his customary garments (verse 4)? Were these simple garments more in accord with the character of the day as one of sorrow, penitence and humiliation, or since the offerings of that day were entirely expiatory did the garments better typify the holiness of Him who became our atonement? For whom did the high priest present a sin-offering as well as for the nation (verse 5)? What peculiar offering was presented for the people on this day (verses 5-10)? What special act of the high priest conveyed the idea of the transfer of Israel's sin to the scape-goat (20-22)? At what time of the year did this day come (29-30)? (corresponding pretty nearly to the close of our September or beginning of October). The chief features of this law might be thus specified:

a. once a year.
b. two goats.
c. holy of holies.
d. complete expiation.

Notice in regard to "d," that the design of the day of atonement was the putting away of all the sins of the people from the highest to the lowest, that they may have committed through the whole year. Incidental and occasional sin-offerings during the year, had, it may be, overlooked much of which the people were ignorant, but on this day there was a general clearing-up of everything so that nothing remained to be atoned for. Blessed be God for a Savior thus typified, whose blood cleanseth us from all sin (1 John 1).

Notice the word for scape-goat in the Revised Version (Azazel), one which gives great difficulty to expositors. My opinion is worth little, but if called for here it is:—As the slain goat represented Christ satisfying Divine justice by laying down His life, the scape-goat represented Him burdened with our sin, deserted by His Father for a season, and delivered for His "bruising" into the hand of the prince of darkness. The goat led into the wilderness brings to mind Matthew 4:1.

Some commentators ignoring the difficulty about Azazel, speak of the slain goat typifying Christ's death as glorifying God with respect to sin in general, vindicating His character and meeting all the claims of His law, even though no sinner were saved (Isaiah 49:1-3, John 12:27-31, 13:31-32). While the scape-goat gives us the application of His death to the sins of the people. Where are our sins who believe in Christ? God is glorified in putting them away forever through the sacrifice of His Son, "as far as the east is from the west."

Notice the distinction pertaining to the people of God under the Gospel as compared with the law, in Hebrews 7:26-28; 9:6-14, 24-26; 10:1-4, 19-22.

The Fifth of the Laws.

What is the theme of chapter 23? Read carefully, and write down the names of the various feasts.

1. Sabbath, 3.
2. Passover, 5.
3. Unleavened bread, 6-8.
4. First-fruits, 9-14.
5. Pentecost, 15-22.
6. Trumpets, 24-25.
   (Day of Atonement), 27-32.
7. Tabernacles, 33-44.

As the "day of atonement" was a fast rather than a feast, it is not enumerated in the above list, though its chronological place is indicated.

Notice that the Sabbath was always a holy convocation, suggesting that meetings for public worship are an essential feature of the observance of one rest day in seven.

Notice that the passover (1 day) immediately followed by the feast of unleavened bread (7 days), made a single feast of 8 days coming in the spring. The first-fruits followed in early summer, the waving of the sheaf signifying the presentation to the Lord of the whole harvest as His, a beautiful type of Christ in the resurrection, 1 Corinthians 15:20. The Pentecost, from a Greek word meaning 50, was sometimes called "the feast of weeks" (Exodus 34:32), occurring as it did 7 weeks after the feast of unleavened bread, and "the feast of harvest" (Exodus 23:16), since it celebrated the ingathering in the autumn. The feast of trumpets was really the New Year feast (about the last of September or first of October), reminding them that all their times were in God's hands, while that of the tabernacles following it so closely, and lasting 8 days, was to commemorate the wilderness journey and the dwelling in booths.

Notice, that some of these feasts must have been ordained only with reference to their observance in the land of Israel after the people had become settled in their national abode.

Notice also that they involved the gathering together of the people, at least the males, in some central place, and for the same object, at least three times a year, and while they were in the nature of joyous excursions, they also contributed to the maintenance of a spirit of fellowship, patriotism and worship. Surely God is a wise Legislator, a benevolent Ruler, and a loving Father!

Notice that the typical and spiritual significance of these feasts must be very rich, though we can not dwell upon it. One who has given particular thought to it speaks of the Passover, the first of the autumnal feasts, as typifying redemption, the tabernacle, the last in the list, mil-

iennial glory, while between the two we have the resurrection of Christ in the first-fruits, the calling out of the church in the Pentecost, and the ultimate conversion and restoration of Israel in the trumpets, and day of atonement.

The Law of the Sabbatic Year.

The next great law is found in chapter 25, the name of which is at the head of this paragraph. Indeed, there are two laws of a similar nature in that chapter, but we will consider them separately. How often did the Sabbatic year come (verse 4)? What was to rest in that year (verse 5)? What use might be made of the natural increase of that year (6-7)? What provision was made for their support the following year (20-22)?

If it be asked what was the object of this law, two or three thoughts suggest themselves. It would be a good thing for the land to lie fallow a year. It would remind the people of God's ownership of everything, and their stewardship only. It would also quicken their trust in and thanksgiving to God for His benefits. It is well to observe, however, that the law was neglected and proved to be a contributing cause to their subsequent captivity in Babylon, see 2 Chronicles 36:21, in the light of the immediate context.

The Law of the Jubilee Year.

How often did the jubilee year come (verse 8)? How and when announced (verse 9)? Who and what was set free in that year? (Individuals that had come into bondage and land that had been sold, verses 10, 13-17, 23-28, 39-42, 47-55). On what principle of equity were these transfers to be made (verses 14-17, 25-27, 50-52)? On what ground were they to be jealous of oppressing one another (verse 17)? What reward promised to obedience (verses 18-19)? Why could not the land be sold outright (verse 23)? What does this suggest as to the probable future return of Israel to that land? (see Isaiah 11:10-16, Jeremiah 32:36-42, Ezekiel 34:11-15, and numerous other places in the prophets). What exceptions are made to the return of property in the Jubilee (verses 29-30, 32-33)? It has been suggested that this provision was made to encourage strangers to settle among them. They could not purchase land, but might purchase houses in walled cities as convenient for purposes of trade, etc. What prohibition is laid in the matter of slavery (verses 39-42)?

It is unnecessary to point out that the Jubilee must have been "the most soul-stirring and enrapturing" of all the Jewish solemnities. It was connected with the day of atonement and based upon what it affected. Redemptive joy comes through the shed blood of the Great Substitute. The feast bore witness to the glad day spoken of for Israel by Isaiah (64:12-23). Read it.

The Types of Christ.

Leviticus is so full of precious suggestions of the Person and work of Christ, that to enumerate them would be to repeat a large part of what has been said. But the three most conspicuous types are:

The offerings.
The priesthood.
The two goats.

The class is advised to review the lesson with reference to making a Word Outline of the seven great laws the book contains. Write down each with such sub-divisions as are indicated or suggest themselves, and in connection therewith note again the wealth of the typology.

The Next Lesson.

The next lesson will be Numbers 1-20, except that after the first reading you may, if you choose, omit chapters 5, 7-9, 15, 18. This lesson will be brief so far as its reading is concerned, and should be well in hand for the study to follow.

Feb 22

1. What secondary name was given to Leviticus?
2. Name the seven principal laws it contains.
3. Name the law of the offerings.
4. What did the offerings symbolize?
5. What three principal things are included in the third law?
6. What four things identify the fourth law?
7. Name the seven feasts, and state what they represented.

Owing to the length of the last lesson the Word Outline of the whole book was omitted, but it may gratify some to have it given here. The following perhaps would be sufficient:

The Law of

1. The offerings, 1-7.
   - a. burnt,
   - b. meal,
   - c. peace,
   - d. sin,
   - e. trespass.
2. The consecration.
   - a. death of Aaron's sons.
3. The clean and the unclean.
   - a. food,
   - b. disease,
   - c. personal habits.
4. The day of atonement.
   - a. once a year,
   - b. holy of holies,
   - c. two goats,
   - d. complete expiation.
5. The feasts.
   - a. Sabbath,
   - b. Passover,
   - c. unleavened bread,
   - d. first fruits,
   - e. Pentecost,
   - f. trumpets, (day of atonement),
   - g. tabernacles.
6. The Sabbatic year.
7. The Jubilee year.
   - a. redemption of persons and lands.

The New Lesson.

A secondary name for Numbers might be "The Book of the Journeyings," since it gives the story of Israel from the departure from Sinai to the arrival at Moab on the border of Canaan. If you examine the chronological hints in the margin of your Bibles, you will see that the period covered by Exodus and Leviticus was not more than a year or two, while that of Numbers was about 38 years. Map No. 2 in the back of your Bible will be an aid in mastering this book. You will see the course of the journey was first northwest as far as Kadesh, then south again to a fork of the Red Sea, and finally northwest as before, around the land of Edom to Moab. The outline is not unlike the form of a somewhat irregular "W." We shall study the book in accordance with a geographical outline, considering first the principal events or facts at Sinai before they started, then what occurred between Sinai and Kadesh, and then between Kadesh and Moab.

This book might almost be called the book of the murmurings, as well as the "journeyings," for from beginning to end it is pervaded with the spirit of rebellion against God, justifying a sort of abstract given of the period in Psalm 95:10, "Forty years long was I grieved with this generation." Let us not forget also that while the annals of many powerful nations of that same period are entirely lost to the world, these of a comparative handful of people are preserved, because of the relation they bear to the redemption of the world through Jesus Christ. This, as well, accounts for the Divine long-suffering towards them, and for all the exhibitions of Divine love which the book contains. In 1 Corinthians 10, we learn that the things that happened to them were "examples" unto us, in other words, their history throughout was a sort of object lesson illustrating God's dealings with us today in a ritual sense, and in no part of their history is this more true than in Numbers.

At Sinai I-X.

What are the chief facts or events associated in this book with Sinai? The reading in accordance with the prescribed rules will make it easy to reply:

1. Numbering and arranging the tribes, 1-2.
2. Choosing and assigning the Levites, 3-4.
3. Giving certain laws and regulations, 5-10.
   - a. the exclusion of the unclean,
   - b. the trespass offering,
   - c. the proof of jealousy,
   - d. the vow of the Nazarite,
   - e. the signals for marching and assembling.

All I would ask you to remember of the above, or note on your Word Outline, would be the three (or even the first two) main facts, and not those enumerated alphabetically.

What was the value or necessity of fact one? Doubtless that every Israelite might know his own tribe or family, especially that the genealogy of the promised Messiah might be ascertained. And then, too, for convenience on the march, and the better preparation for conflict with enemies. C. H. M. has some stimulating remarks as to the similar duty and privilege of the Christian to know his spiritual "pedigree" and the doctrinal "standard" around which he should rally.

Which tribe was omitted from the numbering, and why (1:47-53; 3:5-13)? Which tribe was multiplied by two to thus fill the vacancy in the original number (1:32-35)?

In how many divisions were the Levites classified, and what general duties of the tabernacle were assigned to each (3:17, 25-26, 29, 31, 33, 36-37)? What relative po-

sition in the camp was occupied by the Levites (2:17)? Who encamped closest to the tabernacle on the east (3:38)? What special instructions were given for the sons of Kohath (4:1-15)? What was the law for the cleansing and subsequent consecration of the Levites (8:5-22)? By what symbolic act did Israel identify itself with the Levites as a substitute (8:10-11)? Compare also the following verse. What did God do with the Levites which Israel gave Him, and how does His action illustrate the way in which He still uses His people's gifts (8:18-19)?

Things to be Noticed.

Notice the illustration of God's power and wisdom in sustaining such a host for 40 years, in a country where there was neither bread nor water to be obtained—no transports, no supply trains, no friendly nations to contribute anything. God was in the midst of them. He was all, but He was enough (Deuteronomy 2:7; 8:4). The spiritually-minded teacher will require no hint to apply this to God's wonderful care for the church, grounded on the same fact, His presence with it, supplying its need in the midst of an unsympathetic and antagonistic world.

Notice the typical position of the Levites. Their calling for such a special and elevated service was not of debt but of grace, if we consider their ancestry (Genesis 34 and 49). But observe their preparation for it (8:5-8, 12),—"the blood of atonement, the water of cleansing, the razor of self-judgment." And if we ask whether there were anything antecedent to this which marked them for this selection, perhaps we find the answer in the surrender of their wills to God as indicated in Exodus 32:25-29, with which compare Deuteronomy 33:8-11, and Malachi 2:4-6.

The Minor Regulations.

Under the head of fact number three, attention should be called to the exclusion of the unclean from the camp as bearing on our obligation to put away sin from our individual lives not only, but also the exercise of discipline in the church. Compare Joshua 7:11-12, and 1 Corinthians 5.

Attention should be called as well to the further allusion to the trespass offering, originally spoken of in Leviticus, to emphasize the two features of confession and restitution, since it is only thus the believer can enjoy Paul's experience, Acts 24:16.

Nor is the law about jealousy without its significance to us. See the Divine care to maintain the integrity of the innocent as well as to punish the guilty (5:14, 28). Typically, Jehovah Himself is the husband, Israel the wife proven unfaithful, alas! The application can be made to Christ and the church, or the individual believer in place of the church. Sin is spiritual adultery.

The law of the Nazarite is full of interest. Here one sets himself apart to God in a special manner, temporarily or permanently. He separates himself from things lawful in themselves, but calculated to interfere with his deeper communion and blessing. He is peculiarly a type of Christ as suggested in such words as John 17:16-19, but an example to every believer who desires to come into the place of spiritual power. Study such New Testament passages as, "Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth," "Ye are bought with a price, therefore glorify God in your body," "Come out from among them and be ye separate."

Do not let the sub-division under the letter "E" pass without observing its suggestion along the line of Divine guidance. The cloud seemed to rest over the holy of holies, while within there was a similar but more glorious representation of the Divine presence resting on the mercy-seat (Leviticus 16:2). Observe especially the continuance of this indication of Divine favor notwithstanding their unworthiness (Nehemiah 9:19), and the implicit nature of the obedience required as indicated in the lesson, (9:22). What a blessing to be permitted to look up for guidance and not down! Compare Christ's words in John 8, "He that followeth me." Study also such passages as Romans 8:14.

From Sinai to Kadesh, X-XIX.

The outline of this part of their journey may be marked by the various "murmurings" or rebellions recorded of them, for example:

At Taberah, 11:3.
At Kibroth, 11:34.
At Hazeroth, 12:15-16.
At Kadesh, 13:26.

When did they start (10:11)? Who accompanied them, and why invited (29-32)? What form of prayer was associated with each stage of the journey (35-36)? Is the cause of their first complaint mentioned (11:1)? What was the punishment in this case? As to the precise nature of this "burning" nothing is known, some regarding it as external, and analogous to that which destroyed Nadab and Abihu, while others regarded it as internal, i. e., some kind of "a wasting effect of the Lord's displeasure." It is also proper to say here, that the exact localities of these places referred to can not be defined with certainty.

At Kibroth.

We call the next stopping-place Kibroth, although the proper word as you perceive is somewhat longer. The shorter term, however, will answer our purpose better, as easier to remember. To what was this "murmuring," in part attributable (11:4)? To what Divine appointment or institution did it lead (16-17, 24-30)? What is the name of the New Testament council of which it may have

been the origin? With what particular ceremony were they set apart (17)? What was the immediate result of this anointing (25)? What was the special cause of murmuring in this case (18)? Does the faith of Moses seem to have been equal to this emergency? What explanation of verse 31 is given in the Revised Version? (Showing that the quails flew that high, but were not so thick on the ground). How did this gratification of their desire become a judgment on them?

Spiritual Lessons.

Notice the impressive warnings this affords about worldliness. We long for its gratifications, forgetting its slavery. We are led astray in that direction through our association with false professors or "people of mixed principles."

Notice God's dealings with Moses. How gently He passes by his exhibition of infirmity, and notwithstanding this lapse, bears testimony to his faithfulness (12:7). And yet how impartial in chronicling his faults, thus giving us another incidental proof of the truth of this record!

Notice the secret of a ministry of power. The appointment of the rulers in Exodus as compared with the elders here, illustrates the contrast between a ministry exercised in human strength and in the Divine strength (Zechariah 4:6, Luke 4:18, Acts 2).

Notice the meaning of the word "prophesied," (11:25). Its importance for this particular lesson is not so great, but for other reasons it is well to know that the usual Hebrew word for "prophet" is of passive import, and implies not so much a speaker as one spoken through. Nor is it restricted in meaning to the foretelling of events, but implies any kind of utterance prompted by Divine influence, without reference to time. All this has a very important bearing on the doctrine of inspiration, especially the interpretation of such a passage as 2 Peter 1:20-21, showing that the historical as well as the prophetical books so called, are equally inspired.

At Hazeroth.

What is the event at this place as given in chapter 12? What gave rise to this spirit of rebellion? What punishment fell on Miriam? Why not on Aaron (verse 11)? How is the greatness of the character of Moses shown in this incident? Of course, the practical lesson from this is the seriousness of speaking against God's servants (see such a passage as 1 Thessalonians 5:12-13); but there is also a typical light in which some have viewed it. Moses is regarded as representing Christ in being rejected by his people, who thrust him out of Egypt into Midian. His Ethiopian bride, is the church (composed chiefly of Gentiles). Aaron and Miriam are the Jews opposing this union. The leprosy is the Divine judgments on the Jews, who are nevertheless interceded for by those they oppose, the Christian church. But as Miriam was shut out from the camp only for a season, so when the "seven days" of Israel's rejection are run out, she will be restored again to her land and her God in Jesus Christ.

At Kadesh.

What is the great event at this place, chapters 13-14? How many spies were sent out? How many reports brought back? What difference is seen between the majority and minority reports? In what did they agree or disagree? To which report gave the people heed? What two men protested against their conduct? How is Moses' jealousy for God exhibited? His love for the people? His own greatness of soul (verse 12, last clause)? What is the great hope set before us in verse 21? What punishment was visited on the rebellious? What happened to the men who brought the false report? How does verse 30 illustrate 2 Peter 2:9? What showed the impenitence of the nation (40-44)? What further punishment overtook them? With whom did this whole plan of the spies originate (Deuteronomy 1:19-24)? Does Numbers 13:3 necessarily contradict this? May not God have permitted it merely, when He saw them bent on the purpose? May not the commandment, in other words, have been based on the moral condition of the people? (Compare 1 Samuel 8:22).

Notice that the great lesson of this section is one of warning about unbelief. When at Kadesh there were but a few leagues to travel and they would be in Canaan. Why did they fail? Take God's answer for it (Hebrews 3:19). Do not overlook the fact that this is why so many Christians fail to enter into their spiritual possessions in Christ. "Israel declared that God had brought them into the wilderness to die there, and He took them at their word. Joshua and Caleb declared that He was able to bring them into the land, and He took them at their word." "According to your faith be it unto you."

Notice the typical bearing of their anxiety about sending spies into Canaan. "So," as another says, "may Christians commit an error by indulging undue anxiety concerning their Heavenly home." This may be true if it leads us to become contaminated with spiritualism and kindred evils in the attempt to find out more about it than God has revealed in His Word. Let us rest on the promises, and trust in the guidance He vouchsafes, and the result will more than cover our expectations. He will bring us in and it will be good when we get there.

The Rebellion of Korah.

Chapter 15, which we will not dwell on particularly, is an impressive illustration of Divine grace in the light of the previous conduct of the nation. Its renew-

ed reference to offerings and sacrifices when they came into the land, shows God's purpose still to make good to them, (i. e., to their children who should actually possess Canaan), all His previous promises. Particularly touching is the allusion to sins of ignorance in verses 22 and 28, with which should be contrasted, however, the warning about presumptuous sins (30-31), of which an illustration is afforded in the verses immediately following. How strange the happenings of the next chapter in the light of all this!

What two tribes were chiefly represented in this rebellion (verse 1)? How numerous the ring-leaders (verse 2)? What their animus (verse 3)? To whom does Moses first address himself, and why (6-11)? What made Korah's conduct particularly reprehensible? Of what base falsehood were the sons of Eliab guilty (12-13)? What suggests the possible extent of this rebellion (19)? How once more is the magnanimity and mercy of Moses exhibited (20-22)? What punishment fell upon the ring-leaders (32-25)? What illustrates the blind passion of the people at this time (41)? What punishment befell them?

What further miraculous evidence does God give as to the authority of Moses and Aaron in chapter 17? How does He offset any tendency to conceit in Aaron by the commands of chapter 18:1-7?

The recent death of so many Israeltes had put a large part of the nation in a state of legal uncleanness, which greatly alarmed them (17:12-13). What standing ceremony is now enacted for the purification of such uncleanness, in chapter 18? What evidence have we that this sacrifice, like all the others, pointed towards our Lord Jesus Christ (Hebrews 9:11-13)? Why so much should be said about uncleanness from contact with the dead is not clear, except as natural death shadows forth spiritual death and the deadly pollution of sin which occasions it. There may also have been sanitary reasons, however, although in the nature of the case they could not have been the more supreme.

Notice the many deep lessons of this section. For example, the wonderful mercy of God towards men who have forfeited all claim upon it. The nation had no right to Canaan, but God brings them in.

Notice how much is said about the "stranger" in chapter 15, and compare it with Paul's teaching about the Gentiles, Romans 9-11.

Notice that sins of ignorance cannot be passed over. "While grace has made provision for them in Christ, holiness demands that they be judged and confessed." Notice in what presumptuous sins consist (15:31), and be warned against it. "As the study of the Word is the safeguard against the former, subjection to the Word is the safeguard against the latter."

Notice the folly and peril of envy, jealousy and pride, and familiarize yourselves with such teachings and exhortations as Romans 12:3-8, 1 Corinthians 3:3, Phillippians 2:3-8, etc.

Notice the provision, ample and royal, which God makes for His own, as illustrated in His care for Aaron and his house, chapter 18:8-32. Who loses anything when he relinquishes the world for Christ?

The Next Lesson.

The next lesson will be the conclusion of Numbers, 20-36, except omit chapters 25, first reading you may omit chapters 25, 26, 28, 31, 33, 34, 36.

March 1.

REVIEW of the previous lesson:

1. What period of time is covered by Numbers?

2. Name the three geographical centers.

3. Name the two great facts at Sinai.

4. What remarkable type of Christ in chapter 6?

5. Name the four sub-divisions from Sinai to Kadesh and the chief event or events in each.

From Kadesh to Sinai.

In beginning our new lesson we reach the third and last of the geographical divisions. But a question may be raised here about the locality. In chapter 14:45, the people were driven by the Canaanites from Kadesh unto Hormah, after they had presumptuously tried to enter their land without the approval of God. How then do we find them at the former place again? The theory of some is that about 38 years have elapsed since that occurrence, during which time they have been dwelling at different places, of which no record has been kept, and that now for some peculiar reason they have returned to Kadesh. Others would solve the difficulty by saying there were two places of that name. But perhaps the most likely solution is that chapter 20 really follows chapter 14 chronologically, and that up to this time they had not left the immediate neighborhood of Kadesh. To go into particulars would not be a wise disposition of our time just now, and we will proceed to divide up and consider the following events without further reference to this question. From any point of view it seems proper to say they were now starting from Kadesh, and with that understanding we may map out the events of the itinerary thus:

At Kadesh.

At Mount Hor.

At Moab.

What notable event is mentioned in verse 1? What further ground for "murmuring" is referred to? What was Moses directed to do in this case as distinguished from a somewhat similar action at Rephidim, recorded in Exodus? How did he and Aaron fail to sanctify God in this case? What punishment was inflicted on them therefore? How is their offense spoken of, Psalm 106:32-33? How does the New Testament refer to this rock (or that at Rephidim), 1 Corinthians 10:4?

It is worth while to observe that since this rock symbolized Christ, the offense of Moses was of a deeper and more serious nature than even appears. This can be said even though Moses may have been ignorant of that fact. The two rocks indeed, like the two goats in Leviticus, are taken together to symbolize two aspects of His work. The smitten rock at Rephidim is representative of His sacrifice for us, the rock to be spoken to at Kadesh, of His intercession on our behalf. "Speak ye unto the rock," brings to mind such a passage as 1 John 1:9, which appeals to Christians rather than the unconverted, and on the basis of their previous acceptance of the atoning work of Christ. To smite the rock the second time, instead of simply speaking to it, would seem, (in type), to deny to Christ the full efficacy of His work, and rob the believer of the joy and comfort of it.

At Mount Hor.

What event seems to have made it necessary for the people to journey in this direction (see intervening verses)? What notable event occurred here (28)? What occasioned the "murmuring" here (21:4)? What punishment followed? What was the means of their deliverance therefrom? How does our Lord speak of its typical significance (John 3:14-15)?

If any one desires material for a discourse on the very heart of the Gospel, they will surely find it here. The whole human family have felt the serpent's sting (Romans 3:23). The very image of that which did the mischief was the channel through which deliverance came (Romans 8:3-4). Faith is the instrument, look and live (Isaiah 45:22). Look not to ordinances, or churches, or men, or angels, or even your own character, or penitence or prayers, but to Jesus Christ (John 3:16). Each one had to look for himself. Salvation is a personal matter.

But let us not leave Mount Hor without speaking further of the cause of the people's discouragement. Observe that the Edomites descended from Esau (Genesis 36), illustrating that he that is born after the flesh still persecutes him that is born after the Spirit. It affords a good figure of the hostility of the world to the church. Observe, too, that the main judgments of the prophet Obadiah are denounced against Edom, and because of this very treatment of his brother Israel in his emergency. And further, that although God could easily have made a way for them through Edom, He tried the patience of the one people, and delayed His vengeance on the other, by leading Israel a circuitous way. What an illustration it affords, furnished by the Divine hand itself, as to what the right path may be even though it has many windings, and is encumbered by numerous conflicts!

At Moab.

If the book has been read carefully, you will recall that this section of our lesson practically includes all the rest of its contents. Please locate the country on the map, and see how close it is to Canaan on the east, since from that point the entrance upon the land was ultimately undertaken.

It might be interesting to notice the number of stopping-places spoken of in chapter 21, and the particular record of the conquest of the Amorites, and the possession of their land. Now begin those exterminating wars which Israel undertook at God's command, and as the expression of His wrath against the guilty

nations of Canaan, till all should be cut off. Observe that the victory is ascribed to God. Compare Genesis 15:16, Deuteronomy 2:32-33, Judges 11:21, Psalm 135:10-11, and Amos 2:9.

What prophet comes prominently before us at chapter 22? So conspicuous is he, and so much space is given him, that we may attach his name to the next great fact in the book. By what nation were his services engaged? What other people seem to have been affiliated in the scheme? Does it appear that Balaam had any knowledge of the true God? How would you harmonize the fact that God permitted him to go, and was nevertheless angered at his going? What supernatural event occurred on the journey? What peculiar prophecy of Balaam about Israel has been strikingly fulfilled before our eyes (23:9)? How many distinct efforts were vainly made to curse the people? How does the first part of verse 21 illustrate the believer's position through the righteousness of Christ? How does verse 23 illustrate the Christian doctrine of assurance? Name the verses in chapter 23 that refer to Christ, and, apparently, His millennial reign? How does the conduct of Moab in this case fulfill Deuteronomy 2:25?

The Story of Balaam.

Curiosity may be aroused concerning Balaam. A stranger to the commonwealth of Israel as he was, suggests questions as to the source of his knowledge of Jehovah, and the meaning of God's dealings with him. But it must be remembered that while God had special dealings with Israel, He did not limit the revelation of Himself to that people. Such characters as Melchisedec and Job in the Old Testament, and Cornelius in the New Testament are a kind of parallel. Recall how God made Himself known to the heathen kings through the prophets Jeremiah or Daniel. The story of Jonah's special mission to Nineveh is also in point.

If any one is troubled at the apparent contradiction between God's permission to Balaam, and his subsequent punishment for what he was permitted to do, remember that God looketh at the heart. A careful study of these chapters is hardly necessary to show that he was a double-minded man, hoping against hope always that God would give him his own way. Use your concordance here to see what the Holy Spirit says about Balaam and "Balaamism" in other places of the Bible.

Someone will be sure to ask "whether you think the ass really spoke?" In such matters is it not always well to take the record just as it is? Some commentators would say that the whole occurrence about the ass was subjective on the part of the prophet, a sort of dream or vision he had, but what is the use of our taking the trouble to think that? Of course, while God may have used some of the organs of the animal to vocalize the sounds, it is not necessary to believe that the latter understood what he uttered.

Minor Events.

If what follows in the book is classed as "minor events," it does not mean that they are less important in themselves necessarily, but only that they take up less room comparatively.

It will be seen from chapter 25, that what the Moabites could not accomplish against Israel by war or magical incantation, they came very near doing by more insidious means. What is the name of the idol mentioned in verse 3?

Baal was a general name for "Lord," and Peor for a "Mount" in Moab. Another name for this "Lord of the Mount" was Chemosh, whose rites were accompanied by the grossest obscenity. These lessons can not do much in the way of explaining such matters, but the Bible Dictionary heretofore recommended will come in place here. Which seems to have been chief in the trespass in this case, the people of God or the heathen (16-18)? And yet observe from the preceding verses that the one was punished as well as the other. Compare carefully chapter 31:1-20. What warnings these lessons give about sin!

What, in a word, is the subject of chapter 26? What qualification of an earlier supposition is found in verse 11? On what basis was the land to be divided (53-54)? What word of God had been fulfilled prior to this numbering (64-65)?

If one has a taste for figures, it will be seen that the people had multiplied greatly, notwithstanding the devastating judgments on them. It will be seen, too, that the more sinful tribes diminished, while the others increased, so that the division of the land on the basis of populousness was a direct reward to some and punishment to others. To him that hath shall be given, but in the grace and providence of God the one that hath is the one who obeys and pleases Him. While the land was divided by lot, what shows that the matter was still under the control of God (Proverbs 10:33)? How were the rights and privileges of the female sex to be regarded in the distribution (chapter 27)?

Who is chosen to succeed Moses? What expression (verse 16) indicates God's ability to discriminate among men in assigning them their tasks? How is Joshua differentiated from others (verse 18)? What shows his need nevertheless, of special direction from the word of the Lord (21)?

It will not be especially needful to dwell on the repetition of the several laws about offerings and vows, chapters 28-30. This was made necessary, no doubt, by the fact of their approaching entrance into the land where those laws could be observed more strictly than in the wilderness, and because a new generation had sprung up since their first enactment. But let us pass on to the closing events which culminate in the appointment of the cities for the Levites, and especially,

from among them, the

Six Cities of the Refuge, 35.

For whom were these cities appointed (verse 6)? What qualification of this appointment is contained in verse 11? And in verse 12? How were these cities located with reference to the Jordan? How comprehensive was this appointment (verse 15)? Who was the avenger? Compare Genesis 4:14, 27:45. It seems to have been the duty of the nearest kinsman to the murdered man to act in this capacity. For how long a period was the confinement necessary in order to safety (25)? What were the names of these cities when subsequently selected (Joshua 20)? The subject of the cities of refuge affords suggestive material for a Bible reading. They may be considered a type of Christ in the following particulars:

1. Origin (Divine).
2. Necessity.
3. Accessibility.
4. Sufficiency.
5. Security.
6. Applicability.

In working out the details it might be well to show that like our salvation in Christ, their value was limited to those that remained in them. "Abide in me." Also, point the contrast, that whereas they were restricted to the innocent manslayer, Christ receives the guilty. The man-slayer had to be judged first, we believers are already judged, condemned, and yet free in Christ.

The Word Outline.

Let us as usual sum up the book in one comprehensive Word Outline, perhaps as follows:

1. At Sinai, 1-10.
   a. number and order of the tribes,
   b. choice and duties of the Levites,
2. From Sinai to Kadesh, 11-19.
   a. elders,
   b. spies,
   c. rebellion of Korah.
3. From Kadesh to Moab, 20-36.
   a. rock.
   b. serpents,
   c. Balaam,
   d. Joshua,
   e. cities of refuge.

The Types in Numbers.

1. Types of the church.
   a. the priests typify the church in worship,
   b. the Levites typify the church in service.
2. Human type of Christ—Joshua.
3. Ideal type of Christ—the Nazarite.
4. General types of Christ.
   a. rock,
   b. brazen serpent,
   c. cities of refuge.

The great prophecy of Christ in this book is that of the star spoken of by Balaam.

The Next Lesson.

The next lesson will be Deuteronomy—the whole book. It may seem long, but as that book is mainly a review of the events already covered, we shall not dwell upon it in detail to the same extent. Neither do I insist on your reading it continuously. You may pause at the following-places if you desire, viz.: At the close of chapters 4, 26, 30 and 34. Also perhaps one careful reading of the whole will be sufficient instead of several. But please be particular to do this, and in the doing of it observe especially such chapters as 18 and 28.

May, 8

1. Of what two leaders is the death reported in Numbers?
2. Why was Aaron denied the privilege of entering Canaan?
3. What relation existed between the human founders of Israel and Edom?
4. What prophet speaks especially of the punishment of Edom?
5. What great people were overcome by Israel just before reaching Moab?
6. Who is the most conspicuous non-Israelite in this book?
7. Give the Word Outline of the book.
8. Give the types of Christ.
9. Under what figure is Christ spoken of prophetically, and by whom?

The New Lesson.

A book has been written by Canon Bernard, entitled, "The Progress of Doctrine in the New Testament," in which he shows quite conclusively to many minds not only that the contents of those books are inspired, but that their present arrangement and order are also of the Holy Ghost. The same thing might be said of the Old Testament, especially of the Pentateuch which we are at present considering. It has been pointed out that the purpose of the Bible is, so to speak, to give us the history of redemption through a special seed. In Genesis, therefore, we have the election of that seed (Abraham), in Exodus their redemption, in Leviticus their worship, in Numbers their walk and warfare, and in Deuteronomy their final preparation for the experience towards which all has been directed.

The Book of Review.

A secondary name for Deuteronomy might be "The Book of Review." The word comes from two other Greek words, deuter, which means "the second," and nomion, "law," the second law, or the repetition of the law. And yet your reading of the book has made it clear that it is more than a repetition of the law. In the first place, it repeats, or reviews, the history of the previous journeyings, and when it comes to renewing the law it adds certain things not mentioned previously, see 29:1. Compared with the other books also, it is characterized by a rather warm and oratorical style, and is more spiritual and ethical in its tone. The one great lesson it contains is that of obedience grounded on a known and recognized relationship to God through redemption. We will study it in four great divisions.

The Journeyings Reviewed, 1-4.

Mark the locality, 1:1-5, compared with the Revised Version. This will show that the contents of the book were given to Moses at the place where we left him in Numbers. Mark the time, 1:3, just at the close of the wanderings, so-called, and before Moses is removed, and Joshua prepares to lead the people across the Jordan. At what point does the review begin (6)? To what appointment does Moses refer in verses 9-18? To what does he allude at verse 37? What nations were they to omit from their conquests, and why (2:9-19)? Whose history illustrates that God sometimes punishes by letting men go their own way (24-30)? What other king does Sihon recall? What allusion is contained in chapter 4:10-13? What motive is ascribed to God in His dealings with Israel, verses 37-38?

Notice as you pass along, some of the many expressions illustrative of the spiritual glow of this book, such as 1:11, 31, 2:7; 3:24; 4:7, etc. Preachers will find rich as well as fresh material in this precious book for texts and themes of sermons. The "Homiletic and Practical" part of Lange's commentary will be found very helpful here (pp. 79-84). Some of its suggestions as to the treatment of subjects may be acceptable, e. g., "The turning points in life;" "The difference between Moses and Christ in their power to bear;" "Unbelief, in its grounds, its nature, its utterances;" "The wrath of God as certain, just, consuming;" "Kadesh, an ending and a beginning;" "Israel against Sihon, a type of the Church Militant;" etc.

The Laws Reviewed, 5-26.

At what point does Moses begin this review (verse 2)? With what reverence was this law to be regarded (6:6-9)? What caution is emphasized, 10-12? What secret of blessing, 18-19? How does 7:1-6 illustrate 2 Corinthians, 6:14-18? Compare in the same way 7-8, with Titus 3:5-7, and 8:3, with Romans 8:28. By whom, and under what circumstances, do we find 8:3 quoted in the New Testament? The same question may be asked with reference to verse 5. What summary of the Divine requirements is recorded in chapter 10:12-13? What points to a central place of worship to be established in Canaan (12:5-14)? Compare 14:23-26. What instruction is given with reference to false prophets and lying wonders (13:1-4)? What teachings of Christ about discipleship is based apparently on 13:6-8? What promise looks towards the national supremacy of Israel (15:6)? How were they taught benevolence (15:7-11)? What words of 1 John does this recall? What directions are given about a king (17:14-20)?

Spiritualism.

We have seen that this book contains several matters relatively new, but nothing yet touched on possesses a more "live" relationship to current religious events than the contents of chapter 18, beginning at verse 9. Observe the "abominations" they were to avoid, verses 10-11. Observe what they cost the Canaanites (12). The commission of these wickednesses was not the only cause of their extermination as was seen previously, but it was one of them, and a serious one. It is not within the province of this lesson to examine the different shades of meaning in the words, "Divination," "ob-

server of times," "enchanter," "consulter with familiar spirits," etc., but one is not far wrong who describes them as identical in spirit with what we call fortune-telling, clairvoyance, lucky and unlucky days, mesmerism, and perhaps certain forms of hypnotism, and especially all that class of phenomena known as spiritualism. How God hates it! How plainly He warns against it! Let teachers not fail to emphasize what He says. A book recommended in an earlier lesson will be a valuable aid here, "Earth's Earliest Ages," by Pember. The author shows the connection between these things now being done, and those for which the Canaanites were dispossessed, and the antediluvians swept away. "Demon Possession," by John L. Nevius, D. D., is also to the point, and for pamphlets on the subject, cheap of price and easy to read, write the Scriptural Tract Repository, (H. L. Hastings), 47 Cornhill, Boston. Christians should be fortified on such subjects.

The Prophecy of Christ.

It is not a little strange, and worthy of careful thought, that the chapter which contains these allusions to the "lying wonders" of a false Christ, should also contain the clearest prediction of the true Christ we have yet met. It has always seemed to me like this:—The Israelites might be afraid that when Moses left them, they would be driven by the necessity of the case to do what the Canaanites did in the matter of worship. They would have no leader such as he, what else then could they do? The answer to meet their case is in verse 15. To whom does Moses refer approximately? To whom ultimately? For the answer to this last question consult the marginal references to John 1:45 and Acts 3:22-23. This clear and definite prophecy of Christ affords an opportunity to speak of another law of the rhetoric of the Holy Spirit of importance to be understood. The first law thus emphasized was called the law of recurrence, but this will be known as

The Law of Double Reference.

Now, what is "the law of double reference? It is that peculiarity of the writings of the Holy Spirit, by which a passage applying primarily to a person or event near at hand, is used by Him at a later time as applying to the Person of Christ or the affairs of His kingdom. It is not claimed that the human writers had this two-fold sense in mind always, even if at all, but that this was the mind of the Holy Ghost. in inspiring their words. As one of the ancient commentators puts it, "God, as the original Author of both Testaments, shaped the Old in relation to the New." Or, as Alford says, "No word prompted by the Holy Ghost had reference to the utterer only. All Israel was a type. * * * Christ is everywhere involved in the Old Testament, as He is everywhere evolved in the New." To get hold of this principle of interpretation is vital, especially in the study of the psalms and prophetical books. In the present instance, the primary reference to Joshua, and the ultimate to Jesus Christ is only a representation of what will be found to occur again and again as we proceed.

Do not leave this prophetic allusion to Christ, without observing the marked advance it indicates in the clearness of the conception of the Coming One. Compare the previous allusions to Him, and see how the material for His identification grows. He is not only to be of the seed of Abraham, and the tribe of Judah, but He is to be a Prophet like unto Moses.

The Future History of Israel, 27:30.

The next general division of the book is peculiarly fascinating as containing one of the most notable prophecies in the whole Bible. It will be seen to give a forecast of the earthly history of Israel almost from the time they entered Canaan until the present period. Let us observe how the subject is approached.

What was one of the first things to be done on crossing the Jordan (1-8)? What else is commanded (11-13)? What outline of the curses is given (14-26)? Observe the number and character of the blessings to be bestowed on the ground of obedience (28:1-14). Observe particularly in what these blessings would eventuate (verse 13). Compare the previous allusion to their national supremacy, as all these intimations in that direction have an important bearing on our later study of the prophetical books.

At what verse are the curses on disobedience renewed? Follow them along as far as verse 36, and there pause a moment. From your general knowledge of Israel's later history, when would you say this prediction, at least the first part of it, was fulfilled? Does it not seem to point very unmistakably to what we call their Babylonian captivity, say about 600 B. C.? Compare 2 Kings 25.

Now follow your eye along the succeeding curses until you reach verse 49. What still later incident in their history does it recall? Was not the "nation from far, whose tongue they did not understand," the Latin nation? Does not this point to the destruction of Jerusalem by Titus, the Roman general, A. D. 70? Read carefully the horrible details of the seige in the verses that immediately succeed, and compare them with Josephus' "History of the Jews." This last-named book should be owned and read by every Christian, if for no other reason than the demonstration it affords of the literal fulfillment of prophecy, and especially this prophecy.

But read further still until your eye rests, let us say, at verse 64. What have we here and in the following verses? Is not this a sad, but true forecast of the condition of the Jews in our own time?

We only need to read the current newspapers to answer that question. The history of their treatment in Russia is fresh in our minds, and what shall we say of Anti-Semitism in Germany, and the Dreyfus case in France?

But is there no gleam of hope for this people, so beloved and blessed of God? Read chapter 30, especially verses 1-10. In the light of such promises should not we Gentiles be more sincere and importunate in prayer for the Jews than many of us are? Read Psalm 122, particularly verse 6, to see what blessing we may expect if we do so.

I am led to close the consideration of this section with an extract from Dr. Gosman, the translator of Lange's commentary on this book. It is a little out of the line of the particular work before us, but its merit and timeliness are its justification. He says: "This chapter, in its prophetic declarations, which have been so strikingly fulfilled, contains clear proof of the Divine fore-knowledge, and of the inspiration of Moses. This is all the more clear since the prophecies relate mainly and in their extreme and awful particularity, to the curses which should rest upon the unfaithful people. Moses does not spare his own people, but holds before them the glass of their future defection and sufferings, as he foresaw them. There might have been a motive for dwelling particularly upon their prosperity, but there is no assignable motive for the character of this discourse, unless it is found in the clear foresight given to him of what was to occur."

The Close of Moses' Life, 31:34.

The general title at the head of this paragraph will answer for the fourth and last division of the book. It may be subdivided thus:

1. The charge to Joshua, 31.
2. The song of remembrance, 32.
3. The blessing on the tribes, 33.
4. The burial on Mount Nebo, 34.

Why was Moses as a leader, not absolutely essential to Israel (31:3)? To what virtue are they exhorted (6-7)? What authority attached to the words of this book (9-13)? What was done with it (24-26)?

Why was the song written (19-21)? Observe its spirit of adoration, so different from many of our songs and prayers (32:1-4). Observe the touching and poetic allusion to God's providential care (9-14). Observe the allusion to their position of privilege (29-31). While it speaks clearly of awful judgments on account of sin, what gleam of hope does it contain (43)? How tersely are they taught the value of obedience (47)?

Observe the precious promises in chapter 33, verses 3, 12, 23, 25, 27. How these have comforted the saints in all ages! How they enhance the value of this book! How we should praise God for them!

Who wrote the account of Moses' death, chapter 34? Some think he did himself write it by inspiration, prior to the event. Some ascribe it to a successor, perhaps Joshua. It is hardly necessary to the maintenance of the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch to suppose that Moses wrote it himself. See the interest taken in the body of Moses, Jude 9. See the honor put upon Moses, Luke 9:28-36, also Revelation 15:1-3. Some students of prophecy regard him as one of the two witnesses of Revelation 11, and think that in company with Elijah, he will appear in the flesh in Jerusalem in the culminating days of the present age. He is a striking type of Christ whose personal history will well repay prayerful study from that point of view. We part from him with sadness, but shall see him face to face one of these days, when with ourselves he shall be found casting his crowns at the feet of Christ, who loved him and gave Himself for him.

The Word Outline.

The Word Outline of this book may be held in mind very easily:

1. The review of the journeys, 1-4.
2. The review of the laws, 5-26.
3. The future history of Israel, 27-30.
4. The close of Moses' life, 31-34.

The Next Lesson.

The book of Joshua comes next. After the first reading you may omit chapters 12-21 inclusive.

Mar. 15

IN reviewing the last lesson, see if you are able to answer the following questions:

1. What secondary name might be given to Deuteronomy?
2. What is the great lesson it inculcates?
3. What is its Word Outline?
4. What current form of error does it sharply antagonize?
5. What prophecy of Christ does it contain?
6. What new law of interpretation does it illustrate?
7. How would you define this law?
8. Name the three points in the future history of Israel apparently referred to in chapter 28.
9. What are the verses in that chapter thus specified?
10. Into how many sub-divisions would you analyze the last section of the book?
11. What was done with the book when written?
12. Name some of the precious promises in the book.

The New Lesson.

Joshua might be called "The Book of Conquest and Division," with reference to the events in Canaan it records. According to the marginal chronology it covers a period of how many years? Its character is that of a military campaign, and I have read a criticism of it from that point of view, which places Joshua in the very first rank of military commanders, classing him with the Caesars, and Hannibals, and Napoleons, and Wellingtons, and Grants of all ages. We know, of course, whence he secured his wonderful equipment, and are not surprised at this estimate of him, but it is interesting to have it come to us from another source. The first great fact in the book might be described as

The Command to Joshua, 1.

Observe the renewal of the gift of the land, verse 4, and compare the marginal references to the same matter; for this is not a dead issue, but a very live one, and one that is coming up again as many think in the settlement of "the Eastern question." Observe the promise, 5-6, and the conditions of blessing, 7-8. Also the promptness and leadership of Joshua, 9-15. Suppose we call the second great fact

The Spying of the Land, 2.

As this was not disapproved of God, we may assume it had His sanction, and shows that, notwithstanding His promise to Joshua, the latter was to use the ordinary methods of warfare except where specially instructed otherwise. The use of means is not dishonoring to God, nor does it discount faith in any way, sometimes indeed the very opposite is true. It may exhibit weaker faith to be straining after the marvelous always, than to be willing to carry on the work of God with the common agencies at hand.

It need not be supposed that God commended Rahab's falsehood by what we read in Hebrews 11:31, or James 2:25, any more than that He commended her other sins. Those allusions are to call attention to her faith, a living faith which took hold of God and saved her, sinner as she was. Indeed this story of Rahab is in several points a suggestive type of redemption, and can be employed as a sermon or Bible reading. Observe:—

1. Her abode (a condemned city).
2. Her character.
3. Her faith.
4. The promise she received.
5. The token she displayed.
6. Her deliverance (chapter 6).
7. Her interest in saving others.

All these particulars can easily be wrought out into a most helpful and soul-stirring discourse.

The Crossing of Jordan, 3-4.

Let the title at the head of this paragraph identify the third great fact. See the preparation for it, 1-5, observe the particulars, 14-17, and memorials of the event, 4:8-9. Dwell especially on verse 15 of chapter 3, which shows it to have been all the more extraordinary because of the time it took place. The locality named in verse 16 was about 30 miles from their encampment.

This event has always seemed to me an impressive type of the mediatorial or intercessory work of Christ on behalf of His people. The priests standing in the river-bed until every member of the host had passed over in safety, strangely yet blessedly, brings to mind Hebrews 7:25. F. B. Meyer, in his recent book, "Joshua, and the Land of Promise," suggests many spiritual analogies of this kind, helpful not only to the quiet reader, but also to one who is teaching the contents of the book to others. Moab is the Christian in the world, Jordan, his death in Christ, Canaan, his position on resurrection ground. For the last-named, study such passages as Romans 6.

The Conquest of Jericho, 5-7.

As usual, locate the facts, beginning with those immediately preceding the event itself, the circumcision, the passover, the appearance of the Captain of the Lord's host. Observe that the act of circumcision indicated a gracious renewal on the part of God of His covenant with the children whose fathers had sinned against Him, and perished in the wilderness. In this sense verse 9 may be explained. What indicates the Captain of the Lord's host to be a Divine Person? How do His name and equipment indicate His interest in and approval of the invasion taking place? With what other Christophanies have we met previously?

There must have been a strategic reason for first attacking Jericho, and the plan seems to have been by its destruction to effectually separate the Northern

foes in Canaan from those in the South, and thus prevent a military coalition. Observe the particular directions to Israel. No battlements, but a promenade! How foolish it must have seemed not only to their enemies, but even to some of themselves! Compare such a passage as 1 Corinthians 1:17-31. To what is this victory ascribed, Hebrews 11:30? Dwell on the marked illustration it affords of saving faith. The Israelites did nothing, and yet they did everything. They did the most they could do in the fact that they absolutely surrendered themselves to God, obeying Him to the last degree. Does not the man who truly accepts Jesus Christ do this? Dwell on the illustration it affords of conquering faith. Hearts are shut up like Jericho (6:1), but God gives them to His servants who obey Him. These Old Testament facts are intended to be used in this way as we have seen, and though these lessons can not always pause to indicate when and how, if one has the Holy Spirit as his teacher they will not escape such application.

The utter destruction referred to verse 21, seems horrible in our eyes, but two or three things are to be kept in mind in judging of it. In the first place, it is the teaching of the Bible itself that has made such an act horrible to us. In the second place, it was in perfect accord with the usual methods of warfare in those times. In the third place, and this is the all important thought, it was God's judgment on sin. Sin is unspeakably awful, and we must not minimize it. All through the Old Testament these object lessons are given us, which in the goodness of God, are intended to be deterrent both for nations and individuals, and which in the opposite event, only become types of the universal judgments or judgment to come. The death of the Son of God to put away the consequences of sin must have been vitally necessary to men. Let these Old Testament facts be used to impress this truth on those we teach, and lead them to the Savior.

The Defeat at Ai, 7-8,

which is the next great fact, will be found to emphasize what has just been said about sin, and to bring out one or two new thoughts about it. The former illustration applied to sin in the world, but this to sin in the church, or in the individual believer. Here "the children of Israel committed a trespass" (verse 1). See the consequences which befell all for the folly of one (2-5). Compare James 2:10, for an individual application. Joshua's ignorance of the cause of defeat (6:15) has a deep lesson likewise, which may bring to mind 2 Corinthians 6:14; 7:1, and kindred passages. Mr. Beecher once said that half of our troubles were just God dragging us; they would depart if we stood on our feet and went whither He desired. This story of Joshua's discouragement is in that line. Let verses 16-21 be used as an illustration of the deep principle in Numbers 32:23, last clause. Let it be remembered in Achan's case as in that of Nadab and Abihu, that it is not a question of the eternal damnation of his soul, but of God's earthly judgments among His people. Let the victory recorded in chapter 8 illustrate the power over spiritual enemies which becomes theirs who are living in obedience to God's commands.

The Rescue of Gibeon, 9-10.

This fact brings us to the most interesting part of the book, as it is also the most critical moment in the present history of Israel. Observe the wiles of the Gibeonites (3-13), and the failure of Isreal to ask counsel of God before entering into a covenant with them (14-15). Observe, too, the relation which the Gibeonites ever after sustained towards Israel (22-27). Observe the confederation of the five kings against Gibeon, and the reason for it (10:1-5). Study the location of the kingdoms or cities represented by these kings, and observe that they were all in the southern part of Canaan. Their destruction, therefore, in a bunch meant the conquest practically, of the whole of that region. Observe the supernatural phenomena associated with the battle, e. g., the Lord's special encouragement to Joshua (8), the visitation of hail-stones (11), the remarkable prayer (12), and more remarkable answer (13-14), and finally, the issue of the contest (42).

Did the Sun and Moon Stand Still?

This miracle shares with that in the book of Jonah, the distinction of being more "spoken against" than any other in the Old Testament. Joshua speaks in verse 12, and the historian in verse 13 in the popular language of men referring to the Heavenly bodies. It seems to a spectator on the earth's surface as though they moved, while in reality the earth moves with reference to them. This miracle, therefore, literally construed, was the cessation of the earth's revolution on its axis by the space of a day. Men say this could not be, but they forget who God is, and what He has done. Given a God who can create the earth and set it rolling on its axis, and it can not be too hard for Him to stop it twenty-four hours without allowing it, or the universe of which it is an important part, to get out of order.

All the supernatural phenomena attendant on this battle, and its prime importance to Israel at that particular juncture, and hence to the plans and purposes of God in the earth, prepare us to accept this view of the case. In addition to this there is other corroborative evidence which may, or may not, be regarded as having value. For example, Professor C. A. Totten, a mathematician, and at one time professor of military science in Yale College, has made and published

calculations to show that one day in the earth's history was 48 hours long. A tradition to the same effect is held by the Egyptians and Chinese.

These things are not stated for the purpose of maintaining a theory, or defending a principle of exegesis, or opposing Christians who take another view of the matter, but simply to express a personal opinion. Men whom we all love and respect hold differently. For example, F. B. Meyer, in the book previously referred to, speaks of this incident thus: "God could make the clock of the universe stop if it were necessary. But it is not necessary to believe that He did this. By some process, the laws of which are at present unknown to us, but of which we get glimpses, in refraction, in the after-glow of sunset, God was able to prolong the daylight until Israel had made an end of slaying their foes."

The Close of the War, 11.

The seventh great fact in the book may be stated in the words at the head of this paragraph, and requires the briefest treatment. Examine the map, and observe that the names of the places mentioned in the text bear out the general statement as to locality, in verse 2. Locate the particular field of battle, verse 5. Observe the vastness of the combination against Israel, (1-4), and the thoroughness of the victory (8, 10, 12). Observe that this did for the northern part of Canaan what the previous victory secured for the South. Observe the reference to the conclusion of the campaign (23), to which allusion will be made again in the study of the next book.

Verse 20 may trouble some, but it must be remembered that when such "hardening" is spoken of, it always pre-supposes conduct on the part of the people obstinately opposed to God's will. This was dwelt on in the case of Pharoah. Such hardening is a Divine judgment on men for wicked actions freely indulged in on their part. Compare 2 Thessalonians 2, especially verses 10-12. Is there any evil of the present day, of a religious character, which these verses bring to mind? Let us beware of it.

The Division of the Land, 12-21.

In the consideration of this event there are certain especially interesting features to be observed. In the first place, the conclusion of the campaign noticed in the last chapter must be qualified to our understanding (13:1). The land was conquered in a general sense, but not in detail. The first settlers in this country conquered the land when New England was settled, but there was a great deal of conquering done afterwards before the Pacific coast was reached. The land was ours in one sense, and it had to become ours in another sense. Observe that the separate tribes were not as eager for this conquest as might have been expected, and that personal ease and advantage soon began to supersede zeal for God (16:10, 18:3, etc.). Observe the fulfillment of earlier instructions concerning Caleb and Joshua (14:6-14, 19:49-50), the setting up of the tabernacle (18:1), and the assignment of the cities of refuge (20).

The Altar of Witness, 22.

Observe the commendable fidelity of the two and a half tribes (1-6), and the commendable action of patient inquiry and investigation (11-33) on the part of the other tribes. Individuals have sustained "strained" relations with one another for years, and nations have gone to war for the lack of observance of such an example. See Matthew 18:15. Observe the value of public memorials of great men and great events. How often have such memorials been referred to thus far in our studies! What statues, or monuments or tablets of this kind are in your town? What are you yourself doing personally, to instruct and benefit later generations in this way? Especially, how is the memory of God's great goodness being perpetuated in a public way? Is the Sabbath observed, Thanksgiving day, or Fast day? Is God publicly recognized and honored among us as He ought to be? Do our children thus hear us rehearse His wondrous acts of old time? Should not Washington's birthday, and the Fourth of July be holy days before the Lord, for His sake and our children's sake? What great memorial or "altar of witness" has God Himself set up for us in His church to keep perpetually before us and our children the wonderful sacrifice of His Son? All this is aside somewhat, but may be suggestive in the use of this chapter in preaching and teaching.

The Renewal of the Covenant, 23-24.

In what solemn and important act does Joshua now engage before his death? What commandment does he lay upon the people (23:6-8)? With what promise does he assure them (10)? What warning does he give them (12-13)? What seems to be his feeling as to their future conduct, as expressed in the general tenor of his words? What choice does he set before them (24:15)? What obligation do the people lay upon themselves in the verses that follow? What testimony to the authenticity of this book is contained in verse 26? At what age did Joshua die? Point out in these two chapters the ways in which he kept his own merit in the background and exalted God.

The Word Outline.

1. Command to Joshua, 1.
2. Spying the land, 2.
3. Crossing the Jordan, 3-4.
4. Conquest of Jericho, 5-6.
5. Defeat at Ai, 7-8.
6. Rescue of Gibeon, 9-10.
7. Close of the war, 11.
8. Division of the land, 12-21.
9. Altar of witness, 22.

10. Renewal of covenant, 23-24.
11. Death of Joshua, 24.

The Next Lesson.

The next lesson will include Judges and Ruth, except that after the first reading you may omit Judges 17-21, and the whole of Ruth.

Mar. 22

1. What secondary name was given to the book of Joshua?
2. What period of time did it cover?
3. What is its word outline?
4. Whose history therein affords an illustration of redemption?
5. What Divine manifestation is recorded in the book?
6. In connection with what battle was the great miracle wrought?
7. Which of the tribes were located east of the Jordan?

The New Lesson.

The story of the book of Judges is something like this:—While Joshua and the elders of that generation lived, (those who had personally known the wonders of Jehovah), the people continued in measureable obedience to the Divine law. But when they died, and another generation came on the scene, there was a steady decline. They had made the way easy for this, by failing to drive out all the Canaanites from amongst them, as we saw in the last lesson. The proximity of these corrupt heathen people began to act like leaven in the dough. Israel intermarried with them, and by degrees was led into idolatry by them. This weakened their power so that from conquerors they became the conquered. They turned their back upon God, who, in a sense, turned His back upon them, allowing them to be taken captive by their enemies, and sorely oppressed.

In their distress they would repent, and cry out unto Him, when He would deliver them through the instrumentality of some man, miraculously endued, called a judge. As long as this man lived they would be held in obedience, but on his decease a relapse into sin would follow, and the same round of experience be repeated.

The Preface to the Book.

The story as told above is outlined for us very distinctly in chapter 2:6-19, which takes the place of a preface to the whole book, and suggests that a spiritual outline of its contents might be held in mind in four words:

Sin.
Punishment.
Repentance.
Deliverance.

The Period Covered.

If you will look at the chronology suggested in the margin at chapter 1, and again at chapter 16, you will perceive it to be estimated that about 300 years was the period covered by the judges; to which should be added, however, the years of Eli and Samuel in the following book, (who were also judges), and which increases the time to 330 years, more or less. And yet this does not agree with Paul's words in Acts 13:20. A perfectly satisfactory explanation of this can not as yet be given, but it should content for the present to know that the data in Judges are somewhat obscure, and that the calculations of our commentators as indicated in the marginal chronology may have to be changed. For our purpose at present, however, it will do.

The Number of Judges.

How many judges are named in the book? At first you may reply 13, but the usurped rule of Abimelech, the fratricide, chapter 9, is not usually counted, thus limiting the number to 12. Please take a sheet of paper, and write down for yourself the name of each judge and, where you can, the name of the people from whom he delivered Israel, and also some peculiarity in his history that will differentiate him from the others in your thought, and aid you to recall him. Perhaps the following will help you:

Othniel. First judge. Mesopotamia, 3.
Ehud. Dagger. Moab, 3.
Shamgar. Ox-goad. Philistia, 3.
Deborah. Female. Canaan, 4-5.
Gideon. 300 men. Midian, 6-8.
Tola and Jair. Peaceful times, 10.
Ibzan, Elon and Abdon. Peaceful times, 12.
Jephthah. The vow. Midian, 10-12.
Samson. Nazarite. Philistia, 13-14.

I would ask you to familiarize yourselves with the names of only the leading judges, those to whose doings the largest space is given, i. e., Othniel, Deborah, Gideon, Jephthah and Samson. But in addition, acquaint yourselves thoroughly with the names of the heathen nations referred to—Mesopotamia, Moab, Philistia, Canaan, Midian.

What the Map Reveals.

Now look on the map, or examine a Bible dictionary, and see where these peoples were located with reference to Israel—on the north, east, south and west. This raises one or two questions: Was the whole of Israel in captivity to each of these peoples at different times, or only those tribes of Israel in closest proximity to each? And if the latter be our conclusion, as seems likely, did each judge rule over the whole of Israel at any one time, or only over so many of the tribes as were by him delivered from bondage? The latter seems the more probable idea, and gives a different conception to the period altogether. It indicates that the periods of these judges were not necessarily successive, and two or more may have been ruling at the same time in different parts of the land. It was this unsatisfactory state of things, as we shall see, that was instrumental finally, in moving the people to demand a king.

The Divisions of the Book.

The peculiar nature of this book does not lend itself easily to divisions as in the other cases, but your reading may have led you to recognize an outline not unlike the following:

1. Introductory, 1-3:4.

2. History of the judges, 3:5-16.
3. Particular details of evil, 17-21.

In the introductory portion, which tribe is given the distinction after the death of Joshua? What statement in chapter 1 repeatedly illustrates the lack of faith and obedience on Israel's part? What punishment fell on them for this (2:23)?

Under the second general division there are several things to dwell upon. For example, the deed of Ehud. It makes the blood run cold to read of it, but remember he was not a murderer, but a warrior. The whole world, and always, has made a distinction between these two. Was it an act of personal revenge, or patriotic and religious fervor? Is the deed approved in Scripture? This question brings up an important qualification that should be applied in countless instances in the Bible, of a similar character. A distinguished commentator justly calls attention to the fact that there hangs a shadow over the official career of this man. His name is not praised in Israel, nor is it said the Spirit of the Lord was upon him, nor that he judged Israel. These omissions may be without significance, but are they not noticeable? It has been stated that while his cause was pure, the same cannot be said of any other such assassination in history, down to that of the recent lamentable Empress of Austria.

To a certain extent these qualifying remarks in the case of Ehud's act may be applied to that of Jael under the judgeship of Deborah. I can not but agree with others that while she acted under a Divine commission, and is, in fact, commended, yet she appears to have transcended proper limits in the means employed. These are questions, however, too deep for my soul to fathom, and I would be careful not to be found replying against God.

Material for a Bible Reading.

Pursuant to our custom, when opportunity offers we want to indicate good Old Testament material for young preachers and others to use in the conduct of religious meetings. The history of the next judge, Gideon, furnishes such material. The theme might be styled "The Gospel in the History of Gideon's Judgeship." Carefully review the facts, and observe how they illustrate the following points:

1. Punishment follows sin, 6:1-6.
2. Repentance precedes deliverance, 6:7-10.

In this case note that a prophet was sent to Israel before a deliverer, and that the whole tone of his message was intended to convince of sin.

3. Deliverance is wholly through faith, as indicated, (a) in the selection of an obscure and uninfluential leader, 6:14-16; (b), in the insignificant army, 7:1-7; (c), in the foolish weapons, 7:16-23.
4. Faith rests upon evidence, as indicated in the signs and tokens given to Gideon: (a), the fire out of the rock, 6:21-22; (b), the dew and the fleece, 36-40; (c), the dream of the Midianite, 7:9-15. It will be easy to show how under the Gospel, God does not call on men to accept Jesus Christ for salvation, without affording abundant evidence on which their faith may rest. Let us get hold of these facts in Israel's history in order to use them for God's glory and the good of souls in this way.

Did Jephthah Slay His Daughter?

The chief interest for us in the history of the next most prominent judge is perhaps stated in the preceding question, which presents another of the exceptional occasions when we might step aside from the main purpose of these lessons to explain a difficulty, or interpret an expression. It is to be wished that the turning aside in this case could settle anything, but it can not. Opinions about Jephthah's act have always differed, and always will, and the circumstance only affords another illustration of the wisdom of concentrating attention upon more profitable things. On the face of it, the record gives justification to the belief that he actually sacrificed his daughter, "impelled by the dictates of a pious but unenlightened conscience," and so many commentators believe. And yet, happily, there is another view to be taken, which, without serious violence to the text, puts all concerned in a very different light, and supposes that the fulfillment of the vow consisted in the consignment of the maiden to a life of perpetual maidenhood. Those who have access to Lange's commentary, or the Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia (article "Jephthah"), will find in either a very satisfactory treatment of the case. Perhaps the wish is father to the thought, but so far as the opinion of the writer is worth anything, it seems inclined towards this latter view.

Was Samson a Suicide?

The question about Jephthah is nearly matched by this concerning the succeeding judge, which, however, is capable of a more satisfying answer. That he was not a suicide is evident from his penitent and prayerful spirit at the last, from the fact that he was acting as a public magistrate in what he did, dying for his country and his God, and yet not seeking death except as it was the inevitable consequence of duty done. Hebrews 11:32, honors him in the ranks of the noble witnesses to faith.

The history of Samson, like that of Gideon, is very rich in spiritual teaching, and material for Bible readings and addresses. The fact that he himself was a Nazarite brings forward a typical relation to Christ (Matthew 2:23). His history identifies another of the manifestations of Jehovah-Jesus in the Old Testament (13:3-23). Verse 23, just referred to, is a

xt full of meat for a good sermon on uch a theme as, "God's love for man demonstrated by His acts." Verse 25 of the same chapter illustrates the anointing of the Holy Spirit for service as distinguished perhaps from the infilling of the same Spirit for holiness. Of course the remarkable physical power of Samson is only to be accounted for in this way. It was not in his hair, else there would have been no need that the "Spirit of Jehovah" should come upon him. The growth of his hair was only a token of his consecration, not the consecration itself, and when he failed to withstand Delilah, it was the surrender of the latter rather than the former that brought evil upon him.

Particular Details of Evil, 17-21.

This division will require no particular explanation further than the statement that it traces the evils of the time incident to the absence of a fixed and strong government, or more truly, the absence of obedience to God, (21:25). We see the decay of the priesthood, the growth of the spirit of individualism, and the spread of licentiousness and passion. The two events are (1), the history of Micah's idolatry, chapter 17-18, and (2), the history of the crime at Gibeah, 19-21.

For the Word Outline of this book perhaps that already suggested under the head of its "divisions" will be sufficient, with the addition of such sub-divisions as you yourselves may think desirable. The second division might be the best place in which to locate the names of the leading judges and the countries they conquered, as already given, and the last division would be sufficiently comprehensive if the two events just spoken of were noted.

The Book of Ruth.

The contents of this book are very simple, and tell their own story. During what period did the event occur (1:1)? The authorship is supposed to be the same as Judges, and attributed to Samuel. The chief interest in the book for us, outside of its own intrinsic beauty, is found in the genealogical table at the end, quoted by Matthew, and showing Ruth to have been an ancestress of Christ. As without this little book that fact would have remained unrevealed, we see a sufficient reason why the Holy Spirit should have caused it to be placed in the sacred canon.

The Next Lesson.

For our next lesson we shall take the First Book of Samuel, but after the first reading, the following chapters may be omitted: 25, 27, 29 and 30.

REVIEW of the previous lesson:

1. In what chapter of Judges do we find a sort of preface to that book?
2. In what four words may its spiritual outline be stated?
3. What period of time does it cover according to the marginal chronology?
4. What according to the inspired chronology?
5. Name the five principal judges.
6. Name the three main divisions of the book.
7. What gives the chief value to the book of Ruth?

The New Lesson.

There are five leading characters in First Samuel, see if you can name them without assistance. What shall we call the first fact? The birth and call of Samuel? This may be said to cover chapters 1-3. Give the names of his parents. Give the meaning of his name. How did Hannah celebrate his birth (2)? Of what New Testament song does this remind you? What beautiful promise of guidance and preservation is found in verse 9? How was Hannah rewarded for her gift to the Lord (20-21)? How does this illustrate verse 30, last clause? What New Testament promises does it illustrate? How are Eli's sons described, and on what ground? Who is held responsible for them, and what judgment is pronounced against him? With whom might he be contrasted (Genesis 18:19)? Compare also 1 Kings 2:27. What shows that God can teach His will to a little child? How does 3:19, 20 illustrate Isaiah, 44:26, first clause. It is to be observed that Samuel is the true founder of the Old Testament prophetic order, see Acts 3:24. Soon after his call, as our next great fact discloses, the ark was lost to Israel for a while, the tabernacle, therefore, ceased to have its significance as a center of worship, the high-priests' functions were suspended, and the mediatorship between God and the people rested altogether in the prophet. These facts, to which our attention is particularly called by the German theologian Oehler, are very important to be fastened on the mind at this point. Let us then call the next great fact

The Loss of the Ark, 4-7.

What nation is Israel's particular enemy at this time? What mistake was made in bringing the ark into the battle? How can this error of trusting in the symbol instead of the One symbolized, be shown to be paralleled by any in our day. What prophecy was fulfilled in 4:11? What is the meaning of Ichabod? Was the possession of the ark a curse or blessing to its captors? How were their idols put to ridicule? How does 6:10-12 attest the supernatural? What judgment befell the Bethshemites, and why? Where, and for how long a period did the ark subsequently rest? How would you account for the changed condition of affairs in chapter 7? Examine prayerfully verses 4, 6 and 12. What was Samuel's "circuit" (16)?

Note that Israel's conduct about the ark was not justified by such passages as Numbers 10:35, 14:44, or Joshua 6:4, because they had not sought counsel of God through His prophet. It is more likely they were following the example of their heathen enemies, who carried their idol, or its symbols, with them to battle, believing power to be inseparably associated with it. By permitting the capture of the ark, therefore, God sought two ends, the discipline of Israel, and the vindication of His supremacy over the gods of the nations.

In this connection a question may be raised about the great number slain, 6:19, as being too many for the probable size of the place. All the authorities consulted seem to regard it as an error of the copyist in some way, but are unable to remove the difficulty. The literal rendering is "70 men, 50,000 men," and the problem is how to connect the two expressions to make good sense.

In referring above to the time of the ark's abode in Kirjath-jearim, attention should have been called to 2 Samuel 6, and 1 Chronicles 13, which indicate that a much longer period elapsed before its removal. But the explanation probably is that the twenty years passed before the people "lamented after the Lord," and the revival sprang up.

The Call of Saul, 8-12.

Although it had been clearly predicted in Deuteronomy (17:14-20), that they would have a king, yet observe how naturally it came about that the prophecy should be fulfilled. There was no collusion on the part of any of God's agents to bring it about, but the free acting of the people themselves. Thus has it been always under such circumstances, furnishing one of the incontrovertible evidences of the Divinity of the Word.

How does 8:7 show the identity of God with His servants? What parallel do we find in Acts 9:4? What lesson about making requests of God may we learn from verse 9? Who originally chose Saul to be king (9:15-17)? By what Divine ceremony was he set apart for the office (9:1)? What Divine testimony was given to confirm his faith (10:10-13)? Of which of the judges does this experience remind us? Who now chooses Saul to be king (17:25)? How does this illustrate the relation between Divine foreknowledge and human free agency? What beautiful text for a discourse on the church does verse 26 contain? What parallel as between Saul's experience and that of Christ, is furnished in the next verse? (Compare the parable of the nobleman, Luke 19:14). Under what circumstances was the kingdom finally established to Saul (chapter 11, especially 14-15)? What illustration of God's merciful kindness is found in chapter

12, especially 12-15? On what ground was this kindness shown (verse 22)? Have you ever noticed what it is that God does for His own sake? (Look at Psalm 23:3, Isaiah 43:25, Ephesians 1:6, etc.). How does verse 23 impress Christians with the obligation of intercessory prayer? (See Ephesians 6:18).

The Rejection of Saul, 18-15.

Of what presumptuous sin was Saul guilty (13:9)? Did he show a penitent spirit, or a self-justifying one? What striking text for a discourse on the world-spirit in the church is found in verse 12? How is Saul's successor described, verse 14? It might be well to pause here long enough to inquire how a sinner like David could be so described. One part of the answer is found in a comparison between the two men, Saul and David. Both were sinners indeed, but while the latter was a regenerated, converted sinner, the former apparently was not. The present instance affords such a point of comparison, for David, when rebuked for sin, as we shall see further on, is always humble and penitent, while Saul never is. (Compare Isaiah 66:2).

Under what circumstances was the rejection of Saul subsequently confirmed (chapter 15)? How does he justify himself in this case (verses 15 and 21)? What fundamental and universal principle is enunciated by Samuel in verse 22? How does verse 30 indicate the superficiality of Saul's humility? If you will carefully peruse the preceding chapter again, verses 47-52, it will probably appear that several years had passed in successful, military operations before this second test of Saul's character Godward was applied to him. It may be that an opportunity was thus given to retrieve his former error by an exact obedience. Who can tell how different it may have been with him had he improved it? It will be well for us to notice as we pass along, how frequently this occurs in the history of God's dealings with men and nations. He gives them tests now and then, not surely, that He may discover what kind they are, for He knoweth all things, but that they may be discovered to themselves, and in the presence of His judgments stand self-condemned. (See Psalm 51:4, Romans 3:19, Revelation 15:3). How much we need the aid of the Holy Spirit to endure what God may thus send upon us! James 1:12.

Observe that all through this business Saul follows his own ideas and wishes rather than God's decree, showing a selfish, arbitrary temper, and, as another expresses it, "An utter unfitness to perform the duties of a delegated king in Israel." Steps are now taken to indicate his successor, and as David is kept prominently before us in most of the following chapters, and especially in connection with Saul's treatment of him, let us designate the fifth great fact in the book as

The Persecution of David, 16-26.

What gave rise to Saul's jealousy (18: 6-9)? Who comes prominently into view as David's friend (19:1-7)? Who else stands by him (18-24)? Also chapter 21: 1-9? How does Ahimelech suffer for his kindness (22:6-23)? Where in David's hiding-place at this time, and who are with him (verses 1 and 2)? What city of Judah does he deliver (chapter 23)? How does God interpose on his behalf? Under what circumstances does David spare Saul's life (24:4-7)? And again (26:5-25)?

David Compared With Saul.

It might be well to pause again at this point for a further comparison between these two men. Does not Saul know that David has been chosen of God as his successor (20:30-31)? And yet observe how he seeks in every way to destroy his life, and thwart God's purposes. How different in the case of David! Twice is Saul in his power, and though strongly and plausibly urged to slay him (24:4), yet does he refuse to do it. And why does he refuse? Is he afraid of Saul, or his body-guard, or the anger of the nation? Is his hand restrained by the fear of man, or the fear of God (5-7)? What further light this sheds on that expression, "A man after God's own heart!" David knew he was to receive the kingdom, but his choice was to receive it in God's own way and time (26:7-11).

To what alien people does David finally flee for refuge (chapter 27)? What city is given him to dwell in (6)?

Some Things Hard to Understand.

In Peter's second epistle he speaks of some things in Paul's writings as "hard to be understood," and there are things of that kind here also. But it is a great thing for a teacher to have courage enough to say to his class that he "doesn't know," sometimes. Do not be afraid to say that to those whom you teach, when it is true. It will not weaken but rather increase their respect for you. And yet on the other hand, let it not put a premium on laziness. Do your best to find out, but when your best fails, own it frankly.

One of the things in the present case hard to understand is the apparent irreconcilableness of 16:14-23, and 17:55-58. Must not Saul have known David in the the first instance? How then had he forgotten him in the second? Let us remember that David doubtless had been at home a good while, and grown from a boy to a man, that Saul had rarely seen him before except in moments of madness, and that possibly Abner had been absent from court when David was there. Let us remember also that these old narratives give very brief and partial views of certain occurrences, making it necessary sometimes for us to suspend judgment in the absence of more light. These remarks are in part, quoted from the comments of Dr. Philip Schaff on the

passage, and are the best I can offer.

Another "hard thing" is the allusion to the Spirit of the Lord departing from Saul, and an evil spirit from the Lord troubling him (16:14, etc.). As to the first, it must be kept in mind that there is a difference between the Spirit of the Lord coming into a man in the sense of regenerating him, as we have it expressed in the New Testament, and that same Spirit coming on a man in the sense of enduing or equipping him for some special service. The former transaction would seem to be an enduring one, and when the Holy Spirit comes to us at regeneration, He comes to abide forever (John 14:16); but the latter may be a changing experience, and as true of a man who is not a child of God as of one who is. You can easily recall men in the Old Testament already treated of, who received the Spirit of the Lord in this sense. Balaam, for example. May we not believe that He came and went on him the same as on Saul?

But what about the evil spirit from the Lord? Well, that is deep and mysterious surely. But this is not the only place where such allusions occur. (See Job 1:6, and 1 Kings 22:19-23). Some would resolve this whole circumstance into an experience of melancholy solely on Saul's part, but the narrative clearly speaks of an objective spiritual wicked power that had control over him. But how did this come from the Lord? Only in the same sense that Pharaoh's heart was hardened by the Lord. "The Lord gave him over to the power and might of this spirit as punishment for his disobedience and defiant self-will."

The Close of Saul's Life, 28-31.

We may now return directly to the consideration of Saul's history again. David's persecution at his hands is over, but his persecution of himself continues. What is the great fact in chapter 28? How is Saul's spirit of rebellion still evinced in this act? What chapter in Deuteronomy contains a solemn warning against it? As you read the text, do you think Samuel was actually brought up? May not the witch have been deceived (verse 12)? May not Saul have been deceived (verse 14)? But what about the words of the inspired historian (verses 15, 16)? Do not these make for a belief in the actual appearance of the prophet?

Did Samuel Appear?

Suppose we admit this, what then? Will it stultify God's teachings in Deuteronomy? Will it give countenance to spiritualism? I think not. First, it may be lawful for God to do a thing, which He will not permit man to attempt to do. We can not deny God the right or the power to bring back the spirits of the dead if He shall so please. But this is not to say that spiritualistic mediums possess either the right or the power to do this. How, then, shall we explain the phenomena in their case. Is spiritualism all fraud? Have mediums no communication with spirits? It is possible, and quite probable that at times they have such communication; but we must bear in mind that there is an important distinction between evil spirits as such and the spirits of the dead. The first are demons, angelic beings, wicked in nature, like their head, Satan; but the second are still human beings, separate and distinct from them, always have been, and always will be. These demons may sometimes personate the dead, deceiving the mediums as well as their clients, it may be, and furnishing another argument why we should have nothing to do with them, but they are not the dead whom we knew and loved, and never can be the dead.

Was Saul Regenerated?

We now come to the last act in Saul's life (chapter 31). What kind of death did he die? Poor fellow! we instinctively say. What a contrast his life shows between the first time he appears before us, and the last! His life-story furnishes suggestive, if sad, material for a strong sermon to young men. Picture how favored he was. Favored in his personal appearance, his family influence, his selection as the first king of Israel; favored in his counsellors; favored in his association with Samuel; favored in his acceptance by the people, and in his earlier victories at arms. Favored all the way along in one grand career of triumph, till when? Show what was the turning point in his life, and how he then began to go down hill, almost without stopping, till he reached the foot of it, and ended his life practically by his own hand!

It is this that suggests the question at the head of this section. Some will answer, "Yes, Saul was what we call 'Converted,' as we may judge from such a passage as 10:9; but then, there was his disobedient and unholy life, and finally his awful death. How can these things be harmonized?" For one, I do not think chapter 10:9 is conclusive as to Saul's regeneration. The language is peculiar. "God gave him another heart," not a "new heart," or a "clean" heart, but another heart. That is, He qualified him for his work or office as king. I think Matthew Henry is about right, whose comment is, "He has no longer the heart of a husbandman, but that of a statesman, a general, a prince." But what about Samuel's words (chapter 28: 19), "Tomorrow shalt thou and thy sons be with me?" "Was not Samuel in Heaven," some one may say, "and do not his words indicate that he expected Saul soon to be there?" It is doubtful if God's people went to Heaven prior to the resurrection and ascension of Christ. They went to "Sheol," a Hebrew term for the place of the dead considered generally. A place this, apparently of two compartments, one for the righteous, and one for the unrighteous dead. Saul might have

been with Samuel in Sheol, but not in that particular part of Sheol where Samuel was. The writer has a little booklet on this general subject, published by Revell, entitled, "The History of the Holy Dead," (15 cents), which some may be interested to read.

The Word Outline.

1. The birth and call of Samuel, 1-3.
2. The loss of the ark. 4-7.
3. The call of Saul, 8-12.
4. The rejection of Saul, 13-15.
5. The persecution of David, 16-26.
6. The close of Saul's life, 28-31.

The secondary facts in each of these divisions are so easily recalled that perhaps it is hardly necessary to indicate them in the outline. The next lesson will be 2 Samuel. After the first reading you may omit chapters 8, 10, 13, 14, 21-23.

REVIEW of the previous lesson:

1. Give the Word Outline of 1 Samuel.
2. Name the five chief characters in that book.
3. What distinction has Samuel among the prophets?
4. What illustration does the book afford of the relation between Divine foreknowledge and human freedom?
5. Can you quote 15:22?
6. How would you explain the phrase "A man after God's own heart?"
7. How would you explain 16:14?
8. How would you square the event in chapter 28 with the teaching of Deuteronomy 18?
9. What is Matthew Henry's comment on 10:9?
10. What is the meaning of the Hebrew word "Sheol?"

The New Lesson.

In the Jewish canon, First and Second Samuel were regarded as one book; but it is obvious that Samuel was not its author beyond chapter 25. The remainder has been ascribed to different authors, but common consent, I believe, has fastened on Nathan or Gad, 1 Chronicles 29:29. Do not leave the consideration of Samuel altogether, if it be possible, without engaging in a character study of that wonderful man. One of the greatest in the Bible is he. See how God Himself estimated him in Jeremiah 15:1.

The History of David.

The book now under contemplation is chiefly concerned, as you have discovered, with the history of David; the facts of whose life need to be gotten well in mind for two reasons. First, because of the large place he occupies in sacred story as the great ancestor and type of Christ, and secondly, in order to understand and utilize the Psalms. One half of the book of Psalms at least, was written by David; and written with reference to various occasions and experiences in his life. To understand many of their allusions, therefore, how needful to understand the circumstances giving rise to them? Moreover, unless we understand those allusions how can we extract the real comfort from the psalms either for ourselves or others? The titles of some of the psalms tell us when they were written, and this, of course, is a great aid; but in many cases the origin or connection only can be grasped by carefully reading the psalm in the light of the whole story of David's life. As a single illustration of the latter circumstance, read over again the story of David's connection with the city of Keilah in 1 Samuel, and then compare Psalm 31, for a possible likeness. The book of Psalms will not be taken up in our present course, but reserved probably for that of next year if it shall follow; but these few hints about the study of David's life may not be out of place.

The Earlier Events.

For the above reasons, it would be advisable to review 1 Samuel, especially chapters 16 to 26, which treat so largely of David's early history. For example, become familiar with his genealogy and connected topics. What was his father's name? The name of his tribe? His birthplace? What were the facts or incidents of his anointing? Go over again the larger events under the head of his persecution. Recall Goliath, Jonathan, Ahimelech, Adullam, Keilah, Saul's deliverances at his hands, Ziklag, etc., which should be included in the word outline to be memorized.

The Exaltation of David. 1-5.

The persecutions of David at the hands of Saul are over, and now what follows? What shall we call the first great fact in book two? Over which tribe is David first anointed as king? How long does he reign over this tribe alone, and in what place? Who leads the struggle of the house of Saul against David? How does Abner meet his death? How long is David said to have reigned over the united tribes (5:4)? What was the capital of Israel (5)? What other name was given it (9)?

Notice the principle on which David still continued to act, as shown in the execution of the murderers, chapters 1 and 4. He will take no step towards the attainment of dominion except as led by God. A further illustration this, of the sense in which he might be called "a man after God's own heart."

The Messianic Covenant, 6-7.

There are certain chapters in the Bible that might be called the Alpine heights of revelation. Get hold of their facts, and see their relation one to another, and you have come into possession of the whole range of Divine truth. We have noticed some of them, e. g., Genesis 3, which gives the account of the fall, Genesis 12, the call of Abraham, Exodus 12 and 20, Leviticus 16, Deuteronomy 18, etc. Among these should be counted 2 Samuel 7, of which we are now to treat.

But let us see what leads up to it. Where had the ark been deposited, (see marginal note to chapter 6:2)? What circumstances led to its being there? According to the book of Numbers, chapters 3 and 7, what tribe should have carried the ark? Which division of that tribe? How should it have been carried? What mistake did David make in the matter? How was that mistake corrected on the second attempt? (Compart 6, 12, etc., with 1 Chronicles 15). Does the dancing of David on this occasion give precedent for the modern amusement of that name? Where did David dance, in a ball-room, or the open air? Did he dance with a companion, or alone? What was the motive or spirit actuating him, physical pleasure, or the Divine glory?

Let not this circumstance of the mistake in bringing up the ark be entirely passed over, without calling attention to the lesson it teaches about service. David's motive in the matter was right—the ark should have been brought up. But his method was wrong—the ark should not have been brought up on a cart. God desires us to serve Him not only in the right spirit, but in the right way. This principle observed, would keep many individual Christians and churches from being led astray in the execution of questionable plans for the carrying on of the Lord's work. Its violation now and again, may explain the absence of Divine approval and blessing on some of those plans which were nevertheless entered into apparently with an honest purpose and a good heart.

The Prophecy of Christ.

This brings us to the center of this event. Now that the ark is safely in Jerusalem, what further Godward thought comes into David's mind? What specific reason is assigned against his execution of this purpose (1 Chronicles 22:8, 9)? What new blessing does God promise him however (7:11, last sentence)? To whom immediately did the promise in verse 12 apply? What expression in verse 13 points to the law of double reference hitherto explained? How does verse 10 also point to a time perhaps still future? What is the first sentence in verse 14? How is this shown definitely to apply not to Solomon but Christ (compare Hebrews 1:5)? In this last-named passage, (Hebrews 1:5), the apostle is comparing Christ with angels, showing His superiority thereto; and in the course of his argument exclaims, "To which of the angels said God at any time, 'I will be to him a father, and he shall be to me a Son?'" The inference is (1) that God never said this to any angel, but (2) that He did say it to, or of, His Son. And yet the only other place in which the expression is used in the Bible is this at 2 Samuel 7:14. Therefore putting this fact together with others, it seems to place these words in Samuel in the category of distinct Messianic prophecies. It is thus evident that when God tells David He will build him a house, He is referring not to a material building, such as David contemplated for the ark, but a dynasty, a kingdom, and one that should be set up not in Solomon indeed, but in Christ.

A Beautiful Translation.

Before leaving verse 14, I want to call attention to another rendering of the latter part of it, not only beautiful in itself, but adding very much to the proof of the Messianic character of the whole. It is that of Bishop Horsley, an English prelate of an earlier generation, and a Hebraist of acknowledged ability, who translates it thus:—"When iniquity is laid upon Him I will chasten Him with the rod of men." Thus is it not only made to apply to Christ, but to emphasize that particular feature of His work for man, His substitutionary sufferings, which gives the power and value to all the rest. It is of additional interest to know that this translation is corroborated by that of the great Methodist divine, Adam Clarke, who renders it much in the same language.

Did David Foresee Christ?

Our present chapter contributes something also to answer this question. For example, what was the effect of Nathan's message on David? As we read verses 18 and 19, it seems that he was overwhelmed with the feeling of God's wonderful purpose of honor and grace toward him, and compares the Divine dealing with that of man to the disparagement of the latter. But the two Hebrew scholars already quoted give a different rendering of verse 19, which will be appreciated, I feel sure. It is this:—"O Lord God, Thou hast spoken of Thy servants' house for a great while to come, and hast regarded me in the arrangement about the MAN that is to be from above, O God Jehovah!" According to this, David clearly apprehended Christ's day, as the latter said Abraham did, and was glad (John 8:56). This view of the case is corroborated to a certain extent by Romans 4:5-8. It may seem strange at first that such a different combination of words could be gotten out of verse 19, but if you will turn to the corresponding passage in 1 Chronicles 17:17, you will discover how much more nearly it agrees with the English in that case. The Hebrew of 2 Samuel 7:19, is evidently peculiar, affording some justification, even in its English dress, for a different rendering, and in so far preparing us for that thus given. It is these considerations, among others, that led to the reference to this chapter as one of the more important in the Old Testament, and which will plead excuse for the space thus given to it.

The Great Down-Fall, 11-12.

The intervening chapters between the last great fact and this tell of David's many victories in the extension of his kingdom, illustrating God's interest in him (8:6-14), his own appreciation of it all (11), and his righteous standards of government (15), and natural goodness of heart (chapter 9). But this only serves to deepen the shadow that now falls upon his history. Who will dare trust himself in the light of what follows? There is very little here that needs to be explained to hearts that are naturally corrupt such as ours, but there is much that needs to be impressed in the way of spiritual instruction. Teachers of classes will not overlook it. How solemnly it warns us to make a covenant with our eyes not to look upon sin, and to resist the beginnings of it in our hearts? See such passages as James 1:13-15, and 4:7. Contrast

the dalliance of David with the brave flight of Joseph in Potiphar's house. Observe how one sin leads to another in the attempt to cover up adultery with murder. Verse 6 and the following leave David without excuse. No wonder the chapter ends in the way it does.

But see the kindness of God towards them whose hearts are right toward Him, even though they fall into sin, and black sin! What endeavor is now made to bring David under conviction for this sin (12:1-12)? How does verse 13 illustrate the contrast already spoken of between David and Saul? What shows that though our iniquity may be put away so far as eternal condemnation is concerned, yet earthly chastisement may follow (verses 10-12, 15-18)? Compare also 1 Corinthians 11:32. What suggestion is found in verses 12 and 14 (of the lesson) as to a possible reason for God's acting in such a way? How does verse 25 show the perfect reconciliation which may take place with God on the ground of removal of sin? Read this verse in the Revised Version, but look in the margin of the King James for the meaning of Jedidiah. Does verse 23 indicate that David believed in the immortality of the soul, and the re-union of beloved ones in the future life? How may the last phrase in that verse be qualified by 1 Thessalonians 4:14?

Almost all Christians know that the 51st Psalm was written by David as expressive of his penitence at this time and it should be re-read and analyzed somewhat in connection with this part of the lesson, if opportunity favors. The 32nd Psalm also is supposed to have been written at the same time, to show forth his gratitude for sin forgiven and joy restored. Let it be read as well, noting the psalmist's experience under conviction (3, 4), the effect of confession (5), the testimony to others (6), the joy and peace expressed (7), and the comfort and counsel of Jehovah in reply to him (8, 9). This will make a helpful Bible reading in connection with the story of the psalmist's sin.

The Rebellion of Absalom, 15-20.

The words of chapter 12:10-12, now begin to be fulfilled, and sadness and trial follow David to the end of his life. There had been a triumphant note in the first part of his career notwithstanding his persecution by Saul, but the minor chords predominate after this. Baseness and beauty have often been combined in the same person since the days of Absalom, but his ingratitude and treachery will never be forgotten. Read the story of David's escape from Jerusalem (15:10-16, 30), in connection with the 3rd Psalm. This will afford a good illustration of the way to really learn David's character. The psalms show us his heart. The feelings expressed in this psalm doubtless arose at the point indicated in 2 Samuel 15:12-13. See where the source of his comfort lay, his confidence in God, his hope and courage as brought out in the psalm. How helpful is such a revelation of his inner life to us at similar crises!

Observe how trial enables one to test people. Read chapter 16 carefully with a view to character study—Ziba's meanness, Shimei's cowardice, Abishai's courage, David's humility, Hushai's friendship. What an interesting personality is Joab! Separate what is said about him from all the rest, that you may obtain the real picture of the man.

After Absalom's death what steps lead up to David's return (chapter 19)? What interesting text in verse 10 might be used for a discourse on the second coming of Christ? Whose character most impresses you in chapter 19? Which tribe takes the initiative for the king's return? To what feeling does this give rise (41-43)? Can you give the details of Sheba's rebellion? How all these burdens falling on David corroborated the saying in Proverbs 13:15!

The Summing of David's Life, 22-23.

While the record of David's last days and death is found in the next book, yet all will agree that the song of thanksgiving, chapter 22, and the postscript following in chapter 23 really bring the story of his life to a climax. Amid so much that is beautiful and uplifting in the highest degree consider especially the declaration in 22:36: "Thy gentleness hath made me great." Are not these words fit for the song of the redeemed around the throne? And the words in 23:2: "The Spirit of the Lord spake by me, and His Word was in my tongue." Where in all Scripture can be found a clearer and succincter definition of inspiration?

The Word Outline of the book may be easily kept in mind in a few words:

1. Genealogy (see book 1, chapter 16).
2. Anointing, (see book 1, chapter 16).
3. Persecution, (book 1, 16-26`
4. Exaltation, 1-5.
5. Messianic covenant, 6-7.
6. Sin, 11-12.
7. Rebellion, 15-20.
8. Song of thanksgiving, 22-23.

The next lesson will be the first book of Kings.

REVIEW of the previous lesson:

1. How were the two books of Samuel regarded in the Jewish canon?

2. What two reasons were assigned for the careful study of David's history?

3. How much of the Word Outline of David's life refers to 1 Samuel?

4. Give the whole outline.

5. What chapter contains the Messianic covenant ?

6. What two psalms are connected with David's fall?

7. Who led the rebellion following that of Absalom?

8. Can you quote 23:2?

The New Lesson.

In studying Kings it is recommended that after the first general reading of the book, you use a piece of paper on which to make a rough diagram of the rulers of the two kingdoms after the time of Solomon. Beginning with him as practically the last king of the united tribes, place in parallel columns under his name, and facing one another chronologically, the names of his successors in Judah and Israel, somewhat like this:

Solomon.

Rehoboam, 17.	Jeroboam, 22.
Abijam, 3.	
Asa, 41.	Nadab, 2.
	Baasha, 24.
	Elah, 2.
	Zimri, 7 days.
	Omri, 12.
Jehoshaphat, 25.	Ahab, 22.
Jehoram, 8.	Ahaziah, 2.

The figures in the above diagram indicate the period of each reign. It would be well if, in addition, you were to write down the names of the corresponding prophets. For example, the prophet of Jeroboam's time was Ahijah. He was followed by Jehu in Baasha's reign, and he by Elijah in Ahab's time. This is not to say that there were no other prophets than they, but that they were the ones chiefly mentioned. It will be noticed that scarcely any mention is made of prophets in Judah, but this is not to say that there were none. As a matter of fact, there were many, as the books of chronicles, and the books of the prophets themselves indicate. The fact, however, that God did not forget Israel in this matter, notwithstanding their great unfaithfulness, and notwithstanding that He did not have the same covenant obligation to them as to Judah, is an impressive demonstration of His character of goodness and long-suffering patience. To get the line of the prophets in mind as well as that of the kings, will be a practical help to us by-and-by, in conceiving the place of the different prophets whose books we are soon to study.

Besides writing down the names of the prophets on your diagram, write also some catchword or phrase that will stamp the history of each king on your mind, and help to bring before you the prevailing characteristics or predominating feature of his period. The limitations of space prevent my doing this for you, and even if that were not the case it were better to do it for yourselves. My constant hope is that I am helping the class not so much by what I tell them out of the Bible, and as by the suggestions and stimulus they are receiving as to the way to dig out things for themselves. In this connection it might be further observed that a table or diagram of these kings is doubtless to be found somewhere in the back of your Bibles; but you are urged not to examine it till after you have completed your own. This is in accordance with the fourth rule laid down at the very beginning of our work, viz.: to read independently. It is hoped you examine these rules once in a while, or more properly, examine yourselves to see if you are faithfully complying with them. Much of your interest and success depend on it.

After this general introduction to our book, let us spend a little time together in considering some of the more important characters or events brought before us by the Holy Spirit in its pages.

Solomon, 1-11.

Of which wife of David was Solomon the offspring? Considering the large place he occupies in history, God's peculiar favor toward him, and his typical relation to Christ (72nd Psalm), does it not seem remarkable that he should have been born of that union? But look back again at 2 Samuel 12:25, and the note upon it in the last lesson, and see the reconciled relation in which David was now living with God. Oh, He is a God of mercy and grace! And just such startling surprises as this emphasize that fact all the more. Read the 103rd Psalm again, and consider whether David had not just cause to write it.

Was Solomon crowned before or after the death of David, and what circumstance necessitated it? How does this further illustrate the sorrowful character of the latter half of David's life? How many visions of Himself does God vouchsafe to Solomon? How does this fact add to Solomon's later culpability (11:9)? Note in this verse a striking text for a discourse on "Responsibility Proportioned to Privilege." What do you understand to be the character of that "wisdom" for which Solomon asked (3)? Judging by his career was it what we know as spiritual wisdom, or that which he required for the conduct and administration of the earthly kingdom only? What does this teach young people as to the way in which they should improve their great opportunity to make their requests known unto God (Phillipians 4:6, 7)? What particular illustrations can you mention of Solomon's

great wisdom and prosperity (4)? How does 4:32 prepare us to accept the hypothesis that he wrote Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and the Canticles?

How long was he in building the temple? His own house? What chapter contains his wonderful prayer? How does Jesus utilize the visit of the Queen of Sheba (see marginal reference)? What was the nature of Solomon's guilt? What previous folly led him into it? What earthly judgments made his life unhappy toward the last? Who predicted the division of the kingdom after his death?

The Division of the Kingdom, 12-14.

What do you recall in Solomon's reign that added to the taxation of the people? Wherein did his successor exhibit foolishness? While Rehoboam and his counsellors acted with perfect freedom, what shows God's hand to have been in the whole matter (12:22-24)? What event does this recall in 1 Samuel? Compare also Acts 2:23. Does this diminish the culpability of the wrong doing in any case? What comfort, nevertheless, may God's people draw from it (Romans 8:28)?

What was Jeroboam's motive in setting up the golden calves, religious or political? Wherein did he show an utter lack of faith (11:37-38)? Did he intend to throw off the worship of Jehovah altogether, or was it his thought still to have Him worshipped through a different medium? Which of the first two commandments, therefore, did he break? But did not the violation of the second involve that of the first? Compare the marginal reference to 13:2, and observe the literal fulfillment of that prediction. Such solemn facts are good to store away for illustrative purposes in your teaching and preaching, and have more power usually than others gathered outside of the Bible. How does the beguilement of the man of God (chapter 13) illustrate or intensify the warning of Matthew 24:24? Does Jeroboam profit by the advice received (33-34)? What punishment followed (compare 14: 14-16, with 15:25-30)? Notice the prophecy of the captivity of Israel (14:15), 300 years before the event.

The Wickedness of Ahab, 16-22.

The next matter of supreme importance to be noticed is that indicated at the head of this paragraph or section. We have seen Jeroboam's house cut off in the death of Nadab by the usurper Baasha. Although a usurper in one sense, yet was he the executioner of God in another (16:1-4). But he learnt nothing from the history of his predecessors, nor did any of the kings that followed him. Their continuance in evil, notwithstanding the object-lessons before their eyes is a moving demonstration that "it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps" (Jeremiah 10:23), and that "except a man be born again he can not see the kingdom of God." It is not evidence or education that men want, but life from above (John 5:40). Hence Baasha's line is cut off in Elah who reigns but 2 years, and at length, after the brief interregnum of the traitor and suicide Zimri, the house of Ahab comes into power in the person of his father Omri.

The Nature of His Sin.

Read carefully 16:30-33, and observe the feature in which Ahab's evil exceeded that of Jeroboam. The last-named broke the second commandment, and the first only indirectly, but Ahab broke the first of set purpose. It was his determination, under the domination of his wicked wife, to dethrone Jehovah in Israel altogether. Even His name was not to be mentioned. Baal, Bel, or Belus, as we may learn from a Bible dictionary, means lord, or master, the three names being merely as many forms of the one name of the supreme male divinity of the Phoenicians and Canaanites, as Ashtoreth was that of their supreme female divinity. The common opinion is that they represent the sun and moon, though some say Jupiter and Venus. The licentiousness demanded by their worship gave it attractiveness to poor lost and ignorant people. The word Baal is sometimes used in its plural form, Baalim, which indicates the idol to have been worshipped under different modifications. Baal-Berith means covenant lord (Judges 8:33),, Baal-Peor, the lord of the opening (Numbers 25:3, etc.), Baal-Zebub, the lord of the fly (2 Kings 1: 2, etc.). Human victims were sometimes offered to Baal (Jeremiah 19:5), and elevated places selected for the worship. An acquaintance with these few facts may illuminate the pages of Ahab's history, justifying God's dealings with him and the nation at this time, and explain some of the otherwise difficult features in Elijah's ministry.

Be careful to identify Syria on the map. This nation with which Israel is in conflict so much just now, becomes her wicked ally later on, and plays an important part in bringing about her captivity for that very reason. Moreover, we need to clearly identify her from Assyria, a greater nation on the east which became in time not only her mistress but that of Israel too. Do not miss these geographical and historical data if you wish to steer a clear course when we come into the study of the prophets.

The Story of Elijah.

The wonderful record of Elijah will make a grand subject for a Bible reading or address. Eliminate the facts, and make them stand out by themselves. A single catchword here and there ought to bring the details to mind with sufficient clearness if you have read the book properly. For example: Cherith; Zarephath; Obadiah; Mt. Carmel; Horeb; Elisha; chariot of fire. You observe I have gone into the second book of Kings

for some of the facts in order to group the events of his whole life together. These few words carried in your mind, or on a card in your pocket to refresh your memory occasionally during the day, are enough to start you off on a train of thought of great value in preaching or leading a religious meeting. They may be dwelt on from two points of view, (a), what they teach of the character of Elijah, or (b), what they reveal of the character and power of God. Each fact suggests a separate idea or more, and all taken together will supply a rich feast. All of us can not be eloquent orators in the pulpit or elsewhere, but we can thus learn to bring things new and old out of the storehouse (Matthew 13:52), and be useful ministers of God saving and building up souls in the truth. "Elijah the Tishbite," by F. W. Krummacher, is an old book as they are counted now-a-days, but will never be surpassed either for exegetical or devotional purposes. It is to be obtained only in second-hand stores, but will prove a valuable aid. F. B. Meyer's work on the same prophet is of a somewhat similar character, and as more recent, can be purchased at any bookstore. It is published by Revell, and is inexpensive.

Jehoshaphat, the Worldling.

This general view of 1 Kings should not conclude without some reference to this king of Judah, who from primitive times has been seized upon by teachers and preachers as an Old Testament type of the Christian worldling. A good king you found him to be, and yet the friendship and flattery of Ahab were too much for him. Study chapter 22 in connection with the record found in 2 Chronicles. See the king's thoughtlessness (4), his compunctions of conscience nevertheless (5-8), his narrow escape (30-32), etc. A good text might be found in verse 44. There is a sense in which he should not have made peace with Israel, as there is also one in which Christians should not make peace with the world (Genesis 3:15, John 15:19, 2 Corinthians 6:14-18, Galatians 4:28-29).

Observe the literal fulfillment of prophecy in the death of Ahab, as mentioned in this chapter, 37, 38.

There will be no need of any further outline of this book than that already provided for at the beginning in the diagram of the kings. The new lesson will be 2 Kings, and but one more will follow in the historical books of the Old Testament. With the first issue in February (D. V.), we enter upon the books of the prophets.

REVIEW the previous lesson:

1. Name the kings of Judah and Israel for the first century after Solomon.
2. What great lessons may be learned from the life of Solomon?
3. How would you distinguish the wickedness of Ahab from that of Jeroboam?
4. How would you describe Baal worship?
5. What heathen nation comes into prominence at this time as opposed to Israel?
6. From what other heathen nation is it to be distinguished?
7. What type of worldly Christian is met with in this book?

The New Lesson.

I would recommend in this case as in that of the book just studied that you make a careful diagram of the kings of both kingdoms. Leaving you to fill in the period of each reign, and such catchwords as may seem useful to recall the predominating characteristics, I will place the names of the kings before you in parallel columns, and as nearly as possible in chronological order. They run thus:

Kings of Judah.	Kings of Israel.
Ahaziah.	Jeroboam.
Athaliah.	Jehu.
Joash.	
Amaziah.	Jehoahaz.
Azariah, (or Uzziah).	Joash.
	Jeroboam II.
	Zechariah.
	Shallum.
	Menahem.
	Pekahiah.
Jotham.	Pekah.
Ahaz.	Hoshea.
Hezekiah.	
Manasseh.	
Amon.	
Josiah.	
Jehoahaz.	
Jehoiakim.	
Jehoiachin.	
Zedekiah.	

An examination of the above will reveal one or two things to be especially noted. In the first place, your reading of the details has shown that while many changes of dynasty have occurred in the kingdom of Israel, absolutely none have taken place in Judah. While the history of the first-named presents a constant succession of usurpations, revolutions and the like, that of the second is comparatively peaceful, and the kingly line has been kept intact in the tribe of Judah and the family of David to the end. Indeed, after the captivity also, as we shall see later on, the genealogical records were carefully examined and purged with the same intent. The reason for this is very clear when we remember the early promises touching the coming of the Messiah in the line of Judah and David. It was vital to His identification and acceptance that the descent be demonstrated unmistakably.

Another fact to be noticed is the longer life granted to the kingdom of Judah before the period of captivity. Examine the marginal chronology and satisfy yourselves as to the length of time that elapsed between the removal of Israel by Assyria, and that of Judah by Babylon. Locate each of these heathen nations on the map, and observe that the one conquered and succeeded the other in power between the two captivities.

The Kings of Israel.

Of the kings of Israel, there are three it might be well especially to notice—Jehu, Jeroboam II. and Menahem. The first-named was the executioner of Divine punishment on the wicked house of Ahab and the Baal-worshippers, whose zeal for himself, however, exceeded that for God. This is evident from 10:29. Observe God's readiness to commend him for what had been done and reward him for it (30)—a verse one can scarcely read without wishing in his heart that Jehu had gone further and gained more. Why should not his children have sat on the throne of Israel forever instead of "fourth generation only? Would it not have been so, if Jehu had been out and out for God? Teachers of classes have here an excellent opportunity to impress the lesson of what we all miss in the way of blessing through our own selfishness. Like many another great man before and after him, in Israel and out of it, Jehu put politics before God, and was the loser by it.

The reign of Jeroboam II. is especially notable for its prosperity (14:23-29). He enjoyed the longest reign of any of the kings of the ten tribes; his arms were successful, his coasts enlarged, and he had the further encouragement of seeing prophecy fulfilled in his day, as a further evidence of Jehovah's favor and willingness to bless. It was a golden age for Israel but, as in the days of Egypt under the Ptolemies, Rome, under Augustus, France, under Louis XIV., and England, under Elizabeth, it was an age of great profligacy, as we shall see in the study of Amos the prophet of the period, and was the time which marks the beginning of the rapid decline of the nation culminating in its captivity 60 or 70 years later.

Menahem's reign is of importance as that in which the great nation of Western-Asia, Assyria, first came against the land (15:19, 20). This nation was reaching out for the world-dominion, the great rival of Egypt, eager to command the Mediterranean Sea. At this time she got her first "grip" on Israel, which she never slackened until the end. As she followed up her success in the case of Israel with attacks on Judah we shall have more to do with her at a later period.

The Samaritans.

The captivity of Israel is another way of referring to the deportation of that people into foreign countries, which was part of the military and governmental policy of Assyria at that time, as well as her successor in power (Babylon). This was regarded as the easiest and cheapest way of controlling a subjugated people, since in a strange land and under new surroundings insurrections against authority could not be so successful. Observe that the same treatment was meted out to other captives who were brought to fill up the vacated cities of Israel (17: 6, 24). These people came to be known as the Samaritans. Samaria was originally the name of the capital of Israel. When, and by whom was it thus founded (1 Kings 16:23, 24)? But subsequently the name came to be taken by a large province of Israel of which it was the center. Read carefully in the present lesson, 17:25-41, to obtain an idea of the religious history and character of these people, since it explains in part such later allusions as Ezra 4:1-6, John 4:9, etc. Another item of interest in this connection is the further fact, that the cities of Israel thus occupied by another people could not have been re-occupied by Israel if they had as a nation returned to their land. Not so in the case of Judah, however. No mention is made that the Babylonian government filled up their cities with other people. Hence, after a time, it was possible for Judah to return as it was not for Israel. In all this how plainly is seen the hand of God! The prophets Isaiah and Jeremiah had distinctly prophesied the national restoration of Judah, giving the very time and other detailed circumstances of the event (Isaiah 44:28, Jeremiah 29:10), but no such prediction had gone forth distinctively for Israel (the ten tribes as such).

The Kings of Judah.

Which would you single out as the particularly good or wicked kings in this list? Of the first-named, the story of Joash is interesting because of the conspiracy against him at his birth (chapter 11). What do you know of the history of Athaliah, the wicked grandmother of this king? Of what stock did she come? How long did she unlawfully reign over Judah? To what two persons did Joash owe his accession to the throne? How old was he at this time? What great religious event characterized his reign?

What would you say of Ahaz, was he good or wicked? What two people beseiged Judah in his time (16:5)? To what great nation did he turn for aid? Please remember this incident, as it will throw much light on Isaiah 7 to 9. It was as unfortunate in the end for Judah herself, as it now was for her enemies that she thus entered into confederacy with that heathen people. Assyria thus obtained a hold upon her which threatened her life. In whose reign, and by what miracle was Judah subsequently delivered from her power (chapter 19)? Speaking of Hezekiah, what great prophet comes into view in his day? Wherein does he fail to honor God, and what prediction grows out of the event (20)? Note, that Babylon was a comparatively insignificant power at this time, which made the prediction all the more remarkable.

What later king compares favorably with Hezekiah? What notable discovery helped forward the revival in his reign? What irrevocable purpose of God is made known to the nation at this time (22:16, 17)? By what king was Josiah slain (23: 29, 30)? This brings us to a historical event of much importance. Egypt which comes prominently into view here after so long an interval, is contending with Assyria for the world-dominion. Judah lies between the combatants geographically, and is, in a sense, their battle-ground. This seems to account, in part, for the conflict recorded in this chapter, which in its consequences brings Judah for a while under the sway of Egypt. Whom does Pharaoh now put on the throne (23:31-33)? To what nation, however, does he afterward become a vassal (24:1)? Observe his rebellion against Nebuchadnezzar, resulting as we see from Daniel I, in a preliminary captivity of the people. Notice a second captivity in the following reign, at which time, doubtless, another great prophet was removed, see Ezekiel I. Zedekiah, however, who is now placed in authority by Nebuchadnezzar, manifests the same spirit of insubordination both to the will of Nebuchadnezzar and the will of God, and brings upon his nation what had been foreold by all the prophets from Moses to Jeremiah.

The Prophets of the Period.

I would like the class to give some attention at this point to the succession of the prophets. Who was the last great prophet in Israel, and who was his immediate successor? Following Elisha comes the list of those whose deeds and discourses have been recorded and transmitted to us in books separate from the record of the kings. The earliest of these seems to be Jonah. See 2 Kings 14:25. He was followed by Amos, who perhaps was contemporaneous with him for a time. See Amos 1:1. The successor of Amos was Hosea who may also have been partially contemporaneous with him. See Hosea 1:1. The last-named continued from the time of Jeroboam II. to the captivity, a period of between 60 and 70 years, the longest in the annals of the prophets.

To return to Judah, the first-named of the prophets whose separate book has been handed down to us is apparently Isaiah, who entered on his office in the reign of Azariah or Uzziah, and was

contemporaneous therefore with Hosea in Israel. See Isaiah 1:1. He was followed by Jeremiah, who began to prophesy in the reign of Josiah and continued to the captivity of Judah. See Jeremiah 1:1-3. These last two prophets were doubtless of great aid to Hezekiah and Josiah in the carrying out of their plans of political and moral reform. The great mission of Jeremiah, especially in the latter part of his ministry, was to instruct and exhort Judah to submit to the Babylonian yoke as conforming to the will of God. The explanation of this comes out clearly in Daniel. The people and their rulers were unwilling to comply, however, and the hatred which, in consequence, was entertained for Jeremiah caused him the great suffering which makes his life-story so full of touching interest. It was the unwillingness of the nation to yield compliance, however, that brought upon them all their distress at the hands of Babylon. A diagram of the prophets of 2 Kings might be arranged thus:

Kingdom of Judah,	**Kingdom of Israel.**
	Elisha.
	Jonah.
	Amos.
Isaiah.	Hosea.
Jeremiah.	

The New Lesson.

The natural sequence would be to follow the study of Kings directly with that of the books of the prophets of the given period, and such is the usual plan. But in the present instance a slight exception will be made to accommodate a new class in the study of the prophets alone, and which begins with the February number of this paper. Our next lesson, therefore, will cover the last of the Old Testament historical books—Ezra and Nehemiah.

It may be asked, Why omit Chronicles? The answer is that Chronicles is not necessary to the historical progress of our study, and in that sense adds nothing to Kings. The two books of Chronicles were accounted but one in the Jewish canon, and were thought to have been compiled after the captivity, by Ezra. A leading design was to show the division of families and possessions before the captivity in order to restore the same after the return. Emphasis is laid on the history of Judah rather than Israel, because of the Messianic expectations in that line. The books of Chronicles are a fine commentary on Kings, and for analytic study, and preaching or expository purposes they should be read in connection therewith. It may be added also that to the spiritual mind they present a rich feast of practical teaching, nourishing and stimulating to the soul.

In preparing for the coming lesson it might be well to pause after the sufficient reading of Ezra to prepare a brief Word Outline before proceeding to Nehemiah. In either case it is not designed that the genealogical tables be read more than once.

REVIEW of the previous lesson:

1. Which of the two kingdoms had the more peaceful history, and why?
2. How long a period elapsed between the captivities of the two?
3. Whose reign witnessed the golden age of Israel?
4. Whose reign witnessed the first attack of Assyria?
5. What can you recall of the history of the Samaritans?
6. Name the best, and also the wickedest, king of Judah during this period.
7. To what nation was Judah subject at the beginning of Jehoiakim's reign?
8. State the circumstances under which Egypt gained temporary control of Judah.
9. Name the prophets of the two kingdoms during this period.
10. Who was the last prophet respectively, of Israel and Judah prior to the captivities?
11. What comparisons might be drawn between the books of Chronicles and Kings?

The New Lesson.

Seventy years have elapsed since the first deportation of Jews to Babylon in the reign of Jehoiakim, as seen in the last lesson. The period of their return prophesied of by Isaiah and Jeremiah (see last lesson) has arrived, and the plans of God with reference to it are ready for execution. As Babylon overcame Assyria, becoming the great world-power, so in her turn was she overcome by the combination of the Medes and Persians, whose ruler, Cyrus, is now on the throne. The proclamation he publishes for the Jews' return (Ezra, chapter 1), may be indicated as the first great fact in that book.

The Company of Zerubbabel, 2.

Did you happen to count the number of persons, all told, who at first availed themselves of the privilege granted by Cyrus (2:64-65)? How insignificant in comparison with the multitude carried away! They had settled down in their new home, many of the older generation had died, and there was little disposition on the part of the younger to return. Nevertheless there were enough to fulfill prophecy, and to form the nucleus which ultimately re-peopled the land to as great an extent as ever before. This has a bearing on unfulfilled prophecy. Intimations multiply and strengthen as we proceed, going to show that the Jews now scattered among all the nations as predicted in Deuteronomy 28, will have another return to their beloved land as predicted in chapter 30 of the same book. But objectors to such a view point to the fact that there is no general disposition on the part of the Jews to return to their fatherland, and argue therefrom that it is unlikely to take place. One might reply that there are more Jews in Palestine today by far, than returned with Zerubbabel, and that they had even less desire to return then than now. But God has ways of fulfilling His Word of which men dream not.

The Rebuilding of the Temple, 3-6.

What was the chief work to which the people set themselves on their return? What part of the temple service was first provided for (3:3)? Who were the two leaders in this work? Note the last two verses of chapter 3 and compare the marginal reference to Haggai.

What have we learnt hitherto about the "adversaries" in chapter 4? Who were they chiefly, and what explanation can you give of their remarks in verse 2? What was the character of their charge against the Jews to the Persian government (15, 16)? How long did the work of re-building the temple cease on account of this antagonism (24)? Observe the marginal chronology which shows it to have been 14 years.

Who were the contemporary prophets of Zerubbabel and Joshua (chapter 5: 1, 2)? How does the new potentate, Darius, treat the protests (6)? When was the work completed (15)?

The Company of Ezra, 7-8.

Who led up the second company of liberated captives to Jerusalem (chapter 7)? Who gave him the necessary authority and power? What time elapsed between the two migrations (see marginal chronology)? What personal reference to Ezra does this chapter contain? To what tribe did he belong? Besides the priestly, what other office did he have (6)? Preachers and teachers will note the homiletic value of verse 10, where it is stated that Ezra prepared his heart to do three things, each logically antecedent to the other, and all together forming a fine outline for a sermon or address on some fitting occasion. He set his heart:

1. To seek the law.
2. To do the law.
3. To teach the law.

Observe the motive prompting Artaxerxes (23), and the gratitude of Ezra showing his recognition of the true source of the benefits conferred (27-28). Observe also Ezra's jealousy for God's honor, as well as his scrupulousness in the business affairs of the transaction (7:21-32). These minor details are useful for our own admonition as well as for purposes of practical instruction to our classes.

The Public Reforms, 9-10.

What was the moral and spiritual condition of the people on the arrival of Ezra? Of what particular wrong were they guilty? How does it effect Ezra? What influence is created by his example (9:4, 10:1)? What change is effected, and how (2-17)? These radical measures, it is evident, met with strong opposition in the nation itself, and must have greatly in-

tensified the bitter feeling of the heathen round about, the fruit of which is seen in the necessity for Nehemiah's mission in the next book, and the difficulties with which that great patriot was obliged to contend.

The Word Outline of Ezra.

1. The proclamation of Cyrus.
2. The company of Zerubbabel.
3. The re-building of the temple.
4. The opposition of the adversaries.
5. The renewal of the work.
6. The company of Ezra.
7. The public reforms.

The Book of Nehemiah.

Observe the chronological data in this case. Ezra succeeded Zerubbabel after an interval of about 70 or 80 years, and Nehemiah succeeds Ezra after about 10 years. It would appear that after the radical measures instituted by the latter touching the illegal marriages he went into retirement. Perhaps he was forced into it, for we may believe the antagonism created both within and without the Jewish circle was strong and bitter. He had done his duty, but like many another reformer since, at a serious personal cost. Yet Ezra had his hour of triumph as we shall soon see.

This prepares the way for a possible explanation of the condition of things reported to Nehemiah (1:3). Some think the broken-down walls there referred to, applies not to the results of Nebuchadnezzar's siege 150 years earlier, but to the destruction of later walls which the returned captives under Zerubbabel had erected. The anger on the part of the heathen round about as the result of the action of Ezra, had brought about a state of war which found illustration in the condition of the walls.

Nehemiah's Prayer, 1.

You must already have been impressed with the number of prayers thus far recorded in the Old Testament, and with the evident intent of the Holy Spirit thus to teach us the nature of acceptable worship, and the method of approach to God. They suggest a profitable line of study as a series of Bible readings or discourses on the "Prayers of the Patriarchs." The following outline of Nehemiah's prayer may be useful: Observe—

1. Its earnestness, (verse 4).
2. Its adoration, (verse 5); observe the different names and titles of God in this verse, and the progression of thought they indicate.
3. Its unselfishness, (verse 6). Nehemiah is not praying for himself or his family, but for his nation, people whom, for the most part, he never saw, and who are far removed from his own comfortable and prosperous surroundings.
4. Its humility, (verses 6 and 7). It should not be forgotten, or overlooked, that he couples his own sin and that of his family with the national sin, even though he and his doubtless lived long after the events especially referred to. How suggestive as to your culpability and mine for the death and sacrifice of Jesus Christ!
5. Its hopefulness, (verses 8-10). How strong his faith becomes as he lays hold of the promises!
6. Its definiteness, (verses 11 and 12).
7. Its success, (2:1-8).

Note that Nehemiah's position was not a menial one, but one which indicated great confidence in him on the part of the king, and in consequence gave him unusual influence. In this respect he suggests Mordecai in the book of Esther, or Daniel and his three companions in the earlier days of Babylonian supremacy. The Bible dictionary suggested earlier, would be a valuable aid in such a case as this.

Rebuilding of the Walls, 2-6.

Let it be kept distinctly in mind that the events differentiating the two books of Ezra and Nehemiah are, that in the first we have the record of the re-building of the temple, but in this that of the rebuilding of the walls. The latter action may be considered in two parts:

a. The preparation for the work, 2-3.
b. The hindrances in the way, 4-6.

The preparation may be said to include (1), Nehemiah's private inspection of the situation (2:12-16); (2), his conference with the rulers (17, 18); (3), the names and arrangement of the builders (3).

The hindrances form an exceedingly interesting part of the story, developing the character of Nehemiah as a patriotic ruler and man of affairs, as well as consecrated servant of God; and affording at the same time rich material for a discourse to young people especially on "Character Building." In the adoption of this idea a good text would be found in 4:6, "So built we the wall."

Notice that the enemy tries three kinds of tactics, (1), ridicule, (4:1-6); that failing, he resorts (2) to force, (7-23), and finally to craft, (6:1-14). The craft includes (1), the suggestion of cowardly compromise (1-4); (2), open threats of a slanderous nature (5-9); (3), conspiracy entered into with supposed friends (10-14).

It might be well to examine a map in order to discover that these enemies were on the north, south, east and west of Judah, entirely surrounding her in fact, although the ringleaders among them seem to have been the Samaritans, whose history and peculiar animus have been previously considered.

Internal Regulations, 5, 7-12.

The contents of the chapters indicated above may easily be summed up under the general title of "Internal Regulations," touching as they do matters pertaining to the establishment of the state, political and religious. The following out

line sufficiently covers the ground for present purposes:

1. The law against usury, 5.
2. The genealogical register, 7.
3. The revival of the national religion, 8-10
4. The succession of the high priest, 12.

It is in connection with the third of the events mentioned above that the hour of Ezra's triumph already spoken of occurs. Observe the remark in chapter 8:1, that the people took the initiative in the premises, and brought Ezra to the front. They that wait on the Lord shall never be ashamed. Note in this same chapter an appropriate text for a Thanksgiving day sermon (verse 12). What can make people really happy except a knowledge of God through His Word? And why should not such happiness take on a social character? And why should the social joy of Christians be limited to their own households? Why not "give a portion to seven and also to eight?"

Observe the terms of the covenant, chapter 10:29-39, because of their bearing on the later events in the book.

The Later Reforms, 13.

It would seem that Nehemiah remained in Jerusalem about 12 years, according to the chronological data of chapters 1 and 13; and then returned to Persia (13:6), leaving his brother and another in charge (7:1, 2). But they were not equal to the occasion, and on the second visit of Nehemiah to the Holy City he found the covenant violated practically in every point. It became necessary for him to rebuke the temple desecration, Sabbath profanation, and the old sin of unlawful marriages. It will be found that he not only rebukes, but puts an end to them by heroic measures which should commend him as an example not only to present rulers, governors, mayors, and police superintendents, but to Christians generally in their treatment of sin, civil, ecclesiastical or individual. What a character study he presents in his patriotism, reverence for God, zeal, courage and humility! No story in the Old Testament quickens my blood like that of Nehemiah. I have not read Charles Reade's sketch of him, but others who have done so speak of it very highly.

The Word Outline of this book might be held in mind thus, letting all the facts group themselves around the central character:

1. His period and position, 1.
2. His interest in his nation, 1.
3. His work on the walls, 2-6.
4. His work of legislation, 5, 7-12.
5. His later reforms, 13.

The New Lesson.

For the next three months our studies will be in the books of the prophets, which will be considered not in their order in the Bible, but as nearly as possible in their chronological position. The first to be taken up is Amos, which by a reference to the last lesson will be seen to be the earliest of the books except possibly, Jonah. The last-named will not be considered in this course because of the comparative simplicity of its contents, and the necessity laid upon us to do the best for the class within the given period of one year. For the next lesson, therefore, read the whole of Amos in accordance with the rules indicated at the beginning of our work. As Amos will be found to have prophesied in the reign of Jeroboam II, it will add to your interest in the book if you read in addition 2 Kings 14:23-29, giving the history of that reign.

REVIEW of the last lesson:

1. What books were covered in the last lesson?

2. How long a period of time elapsed since the events closing 2 Kings?

3. Who led up the first company from Babylon, and what numbers did it contain?

4. What was the chief work set before them?

5. Who led up the next company, and how long after the first?

6. What illustrates the moral condition of the people at this time?

7. Give the Word Outline of Ezra.

8. How soon was Ezra succeeded by Nehemiah?

9. What feature most impresses you in his prayer?

10. What work is identified with him?

11. How would you characterize its hindrances?

12. What chapters give the account of the revival of the national religion?

13. What three reforms characterize chapter 13?

14. What are the commendable traits of character in Nehemiah?

The New Lesson.

Read over again verse 1 of chapter 1, and gather out what it teaches of the personal history of the prophet. In what town did he dwell? What was his original occupation? To which kingdom was he commissioned as a prophet? Who was the king of Israel at the time?

Now turn back to the time of that king (Jeroboam II), as recorded, 2 Kings 14:23-29. You will recall what was said in an earlier lesson about its being a golden age of Israel. What made it so? In the first place, the long reign of the king, the longest of any in the annals of the kingdom. How long was it? In the second place, the victories and gains on the battlefield. How are they alluded to? In the third place, the evidence of God's interest in their affairs as shown in the fulfillment of prophecy. Whose prophecy is referred to?

But though it was a golden age in one sense, it was leaden in another. As the study of Amos reveals, their outward or political prosperity was associated with a gross inward or moral corruption, as has been the case with many another nation down to our own time.

Discourses Concerning the Nations, 1:3; 2:3.

Returning to the book of Amos, observe that its first natural division (after the introduction in verses 1 and 2), consists of discourses concerning the Gentile nations. While the Old Testament is concerned chiefly with God's peculiar people, the Jews, and for the reasons already outlined more than once, it must not be forgotten that He has never left Himself without witness to the other nations as well. In this connection read Acts 10: 34, 35. Sometimes these Gentile nations were used of God as scourges upon Israel for her sins, but when they in their wickedness and greed followed out their own bent, and went further in that affliction than He desired, the rod sooner or later was laid upon their own backs. Read Zechariah 1:14, 15. These discourses in Amos we are now considering carry our thoughts in this line. How many such nations are addressed? Of what nation was Damascus the capital? And Gaza? Examine the map, and locate the different nations geographically, as a quickener to your interest. What peculiar phrase introduces each discourse? This does not mean that the given nation had sinned only three or four times, but is a Hebraism indicating that the transgression had been innumerably often.

There are one or two observations of a general character that apply not only to these discourses, but to all in this book, and for that matter to all the books of the prophets. We are not to suppose, for example, that these are all the discourses concerning the nations which the prophet ever delivered, or that we have the whole of any one discourse in these records; but only so much of the given matter as the Holy Spirit deemed necessary to transmit to later generations. It is not affirmed that this is absolutely the case, but only that there is no obligation upon us to believe otherwise.

Discourse Concerning Judah, 2:4, 5.

Tekoa, where Amos lived, and where probably he was born, was a city of the kingdom of Judah, as the map or the Bible dictionary will disclose; but notwithstanding that, he was not commissioned to his own people, as we have seen, but to the sister kingdom of Israel. An interesting allusion to that fact will be considered again when we reach chapter 7: 12, 13, which please examine in connection with the context. This is the only discourse to Judah (2:4, 5) contained in the whole book, and need not arrest our attention now, as so much of the other books of the prophets deals with that kingdom.

Discourses Concerning Israel, 2:6—9:15.

You will have noticed that from verse 6 of chapter 2, till the end of the book Amos is dealing only with Israel. Here are doubtless the synopses of several discourses, and it will be seen that they are built up and put together on as regular a plan as any of the orderly discourses of our own time. We will outline one or two of them as samples of the whole. Most of the commentators regard the first discourse as ending with the chapter, since the following chapter begins abruptly with another command to "Hear." This first discourse, therefore, is composed of three divisions:

1. Their sins are charged against them, 6-8.

2. Their mercies and blessings are recalled, 9-12.

3. Their punishment is announced, 13-16.

Notice that their sins were in the nature of oppression of the poor, lust, idolatry, and greed. The obscurity of verse 8 is removed somewhat by the Revised Version. The mercies and benefits referred to should be fresh in our minds after the recent study of the Pentateuch, but the marginal references will refresh the memory where anything has been forgotten. Verse 13 should be read as it is in the Revised Version. The whole of the punishment spoken of may be said to have reached a climax in the vicissitudes coming upon them through Assyria, and their final captivity, as we have seen. Re-examine 2 Kings 15-17.

One more discourse may be selected for analysis before we proceed, because of its reference to

The Prophet's Call, 3:1-8.

You will remember the circumstances of the Divine call of Moses, Samuel, Elisha and other of the prophets; and how, in one way or another they were afterwards obliged to demonstrate their authority to the people. Moses' rod turned into a serpent is in point. Read also 1 Samuel 3: 19, 20, and Matthew 21:23. All the prophets more or less, were thus obliged to give an account of themselves, and no wonder, when we consider the serious and startling nature of their messages at times. Amos is no exception to this rule, and in the chapter before us proceeds to give an account of his call, only he does so in oriental fashion and in a very roundabout way. In the realm of nature a certain effect always follows a given cause, and his point is that God's command was the cause in this case, and his prophesying the effect. In a word, he prophesied because he could not help himself, he could not do otherwise under the circumstances. Read especially verse 8, but in connection with the preceding verses 3-7, where each interrogation assumes a negative reply.

This introduces us to the second of the discourses concerning Israel, of which the first division may be designated as the prophet's call. The second division, verses 9 and 10, is an indictment against them on account of sin, and the third, 11-14, their punishment is announced as in the former instance.

Read verse 12 carefully, and observe the figure of a shepherd engaged in a personal encounter with a wild beast in order to rescue a sheep of his flock, an experience evidently not uncommon in the East (compare 1 Samuel 16:34-37). But in this instance the destroyer gets almost the whole; almost, but not quite. How much does the valiant shepherd secure in either case? Very little indeed, but something. There would no significance attach to this of a prophetic character, were it not for the plain statements in other places that, although Israel would be severely punished, yet she would not as a nation be utterly and forever exterminated. A remnant would be saved, and this rather graphic figure, suggested by what Amos had himself seen or experienced as a care-taker of a flock, seems intended to foreshadow it. The purpose of calling attention to it just now is to prepare the class for similar allusions later on, which finally, in the aggregate, assume the proportions of a demonstration of the fact referred to—Israel's preservation and restoration in the latter days.

The Prophetic Visions, 7-9.

It is hardly necessary to continue the analysis of subsequent discourses, which are all of the same general character until we come to the last three chapters of the book. Here we have a series of visions which in the estimation of some were each expanded into a discourse. You will observe three of these visions in chapter 7, at the beginning of the chapter, one in chapter 8, and another in chapter 9. In the case of the first two, the judgments of the grasshopper and the fire, (the meaning of which is very apparent to the prophet as signifying chastisement for his people), his intercessions on their behalf are represented as successful, (verses 3 and 6), but in the following instances such is not the case (7-9, also 8:3, 9:1-4). Bear in mind the time of Amos' prophecy, 70 or 80 years prior to the Assyrian captivity, in which sad event these predictions had their fulfillment, approximately at least, however Israel's present condition may be regarded as a farther and more complete fulfillment.

Opposition Expressed, 7:10-17.

At the risk of breaking into the continuity of our thought just here, let us follow the course of the sacred record itself in noticing the opposition presented to the prophet's ministry. Who is the official opponent here? What was the object of worship at Bethel (1 Kings 12)? What language indicates the effect of Amos' messages? How bold and direct were his utterances (11)? What shows his personal courage (13)? What further details of his history does the incident bring to light (14, 15)? What special punishment is now predicted upon the wicked and God-defying priest (16, 17)?

Your particular attention is called to verses 14 and 15, referring more at length to the prophet's early occupation and circumstances of his call. In the second book of Kings, allusion now and again is made to the "schools of the prophets," and the "sons of the prophets," of whom Elijah, and afterwards Elisha were at the head. Nothing definitely is known of their origin or history, though it is sup-

posed they were instituted by Samuel (1 Samuel 7:15, 16), something on the idea of our theological seminaries, for the training of consecrated youth in the knowledge of the law and the prophets. It is evident that the religious teachers of Israel at this time were largely drawn from these sources, but it is also evident that then, as now, God was pleased to go outside of the regular order occasionally in the calling and equipping of His servants, in order, doubtless, that the cause might not be lost sight of in the result, and that His glory might not be given to another (Zechariah 4:6). There are some who will read this to whom it may be a comfort, even if to others it should be a rebuke.

The Promises for Israel, 9:11-15.

It is the characteristic of all the books of the prophets that no matter how much rebuke and threatened punishment they contain as against Israel or Judah, they always see a better time ahead, when the people shall have learnt their severe lessons and profited by them, and God can be glorified in them. We have already seen a reason for this in the fact earlier discussed, that Israel was, is, and is to be, the channel of blessing to the whole earth. Amos, the earliest of these prophets, "sets the pace" for all the rest.

To begin with, look at verses 8 and 9 of the last chapter. God will destroy the sinful kingdom, but will it be utterly destroyed? He will sift Israel among all the nations, as He is surely doing now, but will there be nothing left in the sieve? How do these two verses agree with our conception of chapter 3:12?

But to come now to the plainer and more specific declaration of verses 11-15 of the last chapter. What are these promises?

1. The restoration of the kingdom, 11.
2. The possession of the nations, 12.
3. The prosperity of the land, 13-14
4. The perpetuity of the possession, 15

Is the kingdom of Israel some day to be restored? Is that people to bear sway on the earth? Will the land be fruitful as of old, and even more so, and the cities be built up and inhabited by them again? Will it be a time of rest for them from enemies and war? Such seems to be the literal construction of these verses. To be sure, James' words in Acts 15:13-17 are to be reckoned with, which seem to imply a spiritual fulfillment of these promises in the history of the Christian church. But at the risk of stepping aside for a moment from our prescribed path of synthetic teaching to that of interpretation, let us look carefully at those two words, "After this," in verse 16 of Acts 15. James has just said that God was now visiting the Gentiles "to take out of them a people for His name," i. e., (as many understand it), God is calling out the church from the world to become the body of Christ; and when this is done, when the church or body of Christ is completed and caught up to meet Him in the air (1 Thessalonians 4:16, 17), then "agree the words of the prophets, as it is written, After this, I will return, and will build again the tabernacle of David, etc." The thought is that Israel's restoration will be literal as Amos prophesies, but that its time will be after the second coming of Christ and what is called the "rapture" of the church. The class will please not understand their teacher to be dogmatizing on this point, or insisting upon any particular theory of interpretation. But there is so much of this kind of teaching found in the prophets to follow, that it seemed necessary at the beginning, and in order to clear the atmosphere somewhat, to place both sides of the case before you. As we proceed in the other instances you will thus be the better able to form your own intelligent conclusion. May we all be much in prayer for the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit, without which our own wisdom at the best is but foolishness.

The Word Outline.

In accordance with our custom hitherto, let us make a brief outline of our subject, placing under separate heads what we have gathered about the prophet himself, the nation, and the book. It might read thus:

1. The prophet.
   - Birthplace, Tekoa, Judah, 1:1.
   - Vocation, Herdman, fruit-gatherer, 1:1, 7:14.
   - Field of labor, Israel, 1:1, 7:10.
   - Period, Jeroboam II. 1:1.
   - Call, special and direct, 7:14, 15.
2. The nation.
   - Politically, prosperous, 2 Kings 14:23-29.
   - Morally, corrupt, Amos 2:6-12, 4:6-11, 5:18-24, 6:3-6, 8:4-6.
3. The book.
   - Discourses concerning the nations, 1-2:3.
   - Discourses concerning Judah, 2:4-5.
   - Discourses concerning Israel, 2:6, 9:15.
   - Promises for Israel, 9:11-15.

The Next Lesson.

The next lesson will be Hosea. After the first general reading of the whole book, it is my desire that you focus attention on the first three chapters and the last. In connection with it read the corresponding chapters in 2 Kings 15-17.

REVIEW of the last lesson:

1. Give the personal history of Amos.

2. State the evidence for the political prosperity of Israel at this time.

3. Give some illustrations of its moral corruption.

4. Give the four general divisions of the book.

5. What chapter contains a reference to the prophet's call?

6. How do the discourses in the last three chapters differ in character from the former ones?

7. State the four promises for Israel's future.

The New Lesson.

Read chapter 1, verse 1 for something of the personal history of the prophet. Whose son was he? In whose reigns did he prophesy? The allusion to four kings of Judah, and but one of Israel, might lead us to suppose that Hosea was a prophet of the first-named kingdom; but the contents of the book show differently, and the four kings of Judah are doubtless referred to for other reasons. If, however, Hosea began to prophesy when Jeroboam II was king of Israel, and continued till Hezekiah was on the throne of Judah, it is evident that his ministry covered a period of 60 or 70 years, ending only with the captivity of his people. Compare your diagram of 2 Kings for corroboration of this.

The Character of the Times, 2 Kings 15-17.

It is always well to acquaint oneself with the history of the period of a given prophet when one can do so, for obvious reasons. Read afresh, therefore, the three chapters in Kings mentioned above, and observe the unsettled and iniquitous condition of Israel at this time. It was a golden age no longer, and their sun was setting under a dark and heavy cloud. Zachariah is slain, but the regicide rules only a month in his place until he too is slain. Menahem becomes a vassal to Assyria, and levies exacting taxes on the people to meet the tribute necessary to be paid. His son reigns but two years until he is murdered by one of his own military officers who usurps the authority of the throne. Now the king of Assyria begins to foreclose his mortgage on the land and the people, and the first installment of the captivity takes place. Another murderer comes on the throne, and finally, after a siege of three years, Samaria succumbs to her stronger mistress, and the whole nation is removed far away. Please do not be satisfied with this limited sketch of the period, but by your own diligent reading master the facts for yourselves. If you do so, you will be impressed anew with the wonderful patience and love of God as illustrated by His message to such a people through the lips of our prophet. Hosea is pre-eminently a prophet of love and tenderness, whose characteristics in that respect are simply the reflection of the Divine mind, the pulsation of the Divine heart; but to be appreciated must be seen and weighed in comparison with the environment in which he lived.

An Example of Object-Teaching, 1.

We hear much in these days about object-teaching and the kindergarten system, but it is not so modern or so strictly mundane a method of instruction as might be supposed. God taught His people Israel in that way, of which we have already seen many illustrations in type and symbol. But we come now to one of a different kind from anything yet met with. For example, God would sometimes call upon His prophets to do strange things, to act in a manner out of the ordinary. But as they were conspicuous and important personages in the land, such conduct would naturally excite inquiry, and this, in turn, would open the way for the prophet to give the particular instruction to the people which his action or conduct symbolized or figuratively portrayed.

In the present instance what strange thing is Hosea commanded to do (1:2)? Of course, though strange, it was not wrong for him to do. God's command to do it removes any thought of that character. Moreover, the prophet's motive in marrying the woman was a pure and lofty one. He was to give her his name, and his protection, and lift her out of her former life of moral degradation unto the same high plane as that on which he lived. But why was he to do this? That is, what great historical fact in His own relationship to Israel did God intend to set before them in this domestic history of His prophet? What does the last clause of verse 2 say? Is it not clear that Hosea's marriage with this unchaste woman illustrates Jehovah's marriage with an unchaste people? Where in this book does God call Himself the husband of Israel? But did Israel have anything more to recommend her to God's love and care when He took her to Himself, than this woman had when Hosea married her? Compare Deuteronomy 9:4-6, and Isaiah 51:1, 2.

Observe farther the object-teaching in the very names of the children born of this union (3-9). The meaning of these names will be found in the margin.

Observe a peculiarity of prophetic teaching illustrated in verse 4. There are two distinct prophecies there, but at the first glance it reads like only one. You would think that the avengement of the blood of Jezreel on the house of Jehu and the cessation of the house of Israel were one and the same thing, and took place at one and the same time. But look back at 2 Kings 14:8-12, for the fulfillment of the first, and 2 Kings 17, for the second. How long a period elapsed between the

two, represented by that punctuation mark after "Jehu," in verse 4? This offers a fitting opportunity to remark that the prophets saw the future in space rather than in time. The perspective is regarded rather than the actual distance. As another expresses it, "They speak of things future as a common observer would describe the stars, grouping them as they appear, but not according to their true position." Other illustrations of this principle will be noted further on, but let us fasten the fact on our minds now for future use.

Promises Held Out.

While Hosea is speaking of Israel especially, what side reference is made to Judah in verse 7? See the application or fulfillment of these words as recorded in Judah's history sometime after Israel has been led into captivity (2 Kings 19, especially verse 35). In all such cases, form the habit of examining the marginal references in your Bible, which are a commentary and concordance in one. The above-named reference will be found there.

But is there no hope at all for Israel? Read verse 10. What is the blessing spoken of? In what place will it be realized? Will there be two kingdoms then, or only one (verse 11)? What other prophet has held out a like prospect, with whom Hosea thus agrees?

An Unfaithful Wife, 2.

We now reach a second chapter in the book, and a second in the domestic experience of the prophet. It is a very bitter one. It would appear that notwithstanding the love of Hosea for his wife, as evidenced among other ways in his bountiful provision for her needs; and notwithstanding she had become the mother of his children, yet she turned her back upon him and them; went after her former lovers and companions in sin, and from an unchaste woman became now a faithless, an adulteress wife.

The chapter containing this story is like a dissolving picture, making it difficult to determine just where the record ceases to speak of Hosea's wife, and begins to speak directly of Israel's unfaithfulness to God. We will dismiss the first idea, therefore, and confine ourselves to the second where the intention is very plain. The teaching clearly is that notwithstanding God's goodness to Israel, calling them to be His people, providing for and protecting them when they had no more claim on His bounty than that unchaste woman had on Hosea's love, yet they had abused His kindness and committed spiritual adultery with idols, especially in Baalim worship.

What command is laid on the prophet, verses 1 and 2? What charge is laid at the door of Israel (5)? What is predicted as the outcome of her iniquity (6, 7)? What was the ground or origin of her sin (8)? What shows her culpability for this ignorance (8-13)? How do these verses indicate her punishment? To what particular period do verses 11-13 refer? May they also, according to the law of double reference, find an application in her history at the present time? What allusion to the extent of her punishment (in time) is found in verse 13? With what verse does the usual vision of hope appear? Does verse 18 apply to the present or the coming millenial age? What language agrees with the idea already expressed of Jehovah's (marriage) union with Israel? How does that language show that a great moral change must precede or accompany Israel's restoration? What language in verse 19 agrees with the last promise in Amos?

A Faithful Husband, 3.

Perhaps the third chapter in this interesting history is the most impressive of all. The prophet's wife has deserted him, but he is commanded still to love her, notwithstanding her conduct. And he is to enter into an arrangement with her, by which a certain provision is to be given her by him for her necessities, on condition that for the time being she shall no longer live adulterously with other men. He, too, will keep himself from becoming husband to another woman. It does not seem that they were to live together in their former relationship, but to be kept one for another in this separated state (see verses 1-3).

And now how plain is the application made by the Holy Spirit in the two following verses! To what period in Israel's history can verse 4 apply any more truly than the present? And on such a conclusion what inference may be drawn from verse 5? It might be well to read this verse in connection again with Amos 9:11-15.

The General Discourses, 4-13.

Preachers and others looking for themes and texts of discourses along deeply spiritual lines, will not neglect the precious opportunity here presented. What an analogy we have here to our own standing before God in Christ! When we were first called of God, were we not spiritually just what this woman was morally, when Hosea married her? Had we anything to commend us to Him? Was not His acceptance of us an act of pure grace on His part? And since that time, with so much more to praise Him for as His benefits have been bestowed on us, how often have we treated Him like this unfaithful wife! Is not every act of disobedience on our part a kind of spiritual adultery? Yet has God discarded us? Has He cast us away? Are not His gifts and calling without repentance? Does He not bear patiently with us? Does He not still supply our need? Does He not call us back to Him again? Does not His Spirit work in us repentance not to be

repented of? And shall we not be His forever? Thus we see that although primarily, or historically, the application of these chapters is to Israel in the flesh, yet in an accommodated and spiritual sense it belongs to us. If we are thus always careful to distinguish between these two things, the historical and the spiritual, there is no reason why we may not employ much of the Old Testament in this way. Indeed doubtless, it is so intended to be employed.

The Spiritual Application.

The first three chapters of the book, already considered, form its first natural division, which may be distinguished by the term "Historico-prophetic." They are historic as alluding to the personal life of the prophet, but prophetic, as prefiguring God's relations to and dealings with Israel. The second division of the book may be described as at the head of this paragraph. By "General Discourses," is meant such as we have already studied in Amos, and which it will not be necessary to especially consider here. They give in detail what the first three chapters give in outline, so to speak. That is, they speak of Israel's departure from God, and describe more particularly the forms it took, viz.: falsehood (4:1), licentiousness, (4:11), murder, (5:2), robbery, (7:1), oppression, (12:7), etc. Unlike the book of Amos, however, the discourses in Hosea are not very distinctly defined one from another. The chapters have more the form of one continuous prophecy, and it is thought by some that the prophet himself probably gathered into one discourse the substance of what he had delivered in the whole course of his ministry. The name "Ephraim" so commonly used in the book, taken from one of the chief tribes, is synonymous, or used almost interchangeably, with "Israel." As "Judah" is the title given to the other kingdom, though composed of Judah and Benjamin, so Ephraim is used here as including the other nine tribes.

Your attention was called to the fact that in each of the first three chapters, after rebuke, and warning and prediction of coming suffering, the discourse ended with the promise of future blessing. So now at the close of these "General Discourses," the last chapter (14) concludes in the same way. This further illustrates the law of recurrence which was defined at the beginning of our lessons, and which is a marked peculiarity of much of the prophetic writings. For example, the ground covered in the first chapter of this book, is practically gone over again in chapter two, or chapters two and three taken together. The Holy Spirit thus "recurs" to the subject for the purpose of bringing out certain details, or calling attention to certain features not mentioned before, or if so, in only a very general or incidental way. And so it is with reference to the rest of the book. From chapters 4 to 14, the Holy Spirit is simply "recurring" to the main theme of the earlier chapters. He is not going over new ground, and the matter does not represent what we call progress of thought. The last chapter of the book now to be considered is speaking of the same circumstances, and the same period of time practically, as the last verses of chapters 1, 2 and 3, and all that has intervened has been in the nature of amplification of the other verses of those chapters. The importance of seizing upon such a simple principle as this in interpreting the prophets is too apparent to require emphasis.

The Future Hope, 14.

Let us remember, therefore, that the view-point of this chapter is about the same as that of verses 10 and 11 of chapter 1, verses 14-23 of chapter 2, and verse 5 of chapter 3. With that understanding, let us divide it into its several parts, finding in it material for another discourse or Bible reading.

1. The gracious appeal, 1-3.
2. The promised blessing, 4-8.
3. The practical application, 9.

Observe in the appeal that the very words are put on Israel's lips with which they are to return to God. Observe the freeness of God's blessing to them on the ground of repentance and faith (4). Observe the figurative allusions to the source and character of these blessings in that day, fully agreeing again with Amos 9:11-15, (5-7). Verse 8 might be considered as a future dialogue between Ephraim and Jehovah, thus:

Ephraim (soliloquizing):—"What have I to do any more with idols?"

Jehovah:—"I have heard and observed him."

Ephraim:—"I am like a green fir tree."

Jehovah:—"From Me is thy fruit found."

Verse 9 justifies us, as was said before, in employing the whole subject in a spiritual sense and applying it to the present church period in which we dwell.

The Word Outline.

1. The prophet.
   - Field of labor—Israel.
   - Period—Jeroboam II to the captivity.
   - Personal history—married to an unchaste woman and unfaithful wife, type of Jehovah's relationship to Israel.
2. The Nation.
   - Politically, disturbed and revolutionary.
   - Morally, corrupt as in the time of Amos.
3. The Book.
   - Part 1. Historic-prophetic, 1:3.
   - Part 2. General discourses, 4:13.
   - Part 3. Promises for the future, 14.

The Next Lesson

will be Isaiah 1-35. After the first reading you may omit chapters 13-35; and as to the first twelve you are asked (after the first reading), to observe the following divisions, 1-5, 6, 7-9, 10-12. In connection with Isaiah please refresh your minds with the history of his period, 2 Kings 15-20, especially 16.

REVIEW of the last lesson:

1. About how long a period did Hosea prophesy?

2. In how many installments did the captivity of Israel take place?

3. Of what kind of teaching does Hosea furnish an example?

4. Describe the three stages of Hosea's domestic life as set before us in the first three chapters of the book.

5. Apply these three stages in his life to Jehovah's relationship to Israel.

6. What feature of the prophetic writings generally, is illustrated in chapter 1:4?

7. Why is the first division of Hosea defined as historico-prophetic?

8. How does the make-up of Hosea differ from Amos?

9. How is the law of recurrence illustrated in Hosea?

10. Into how many parts may the whole book be divided?

The New Lesson.

Read Isaiah 1:1, to learn something of the prophet's personal history. Whose son was he? To which kingdom was he commissioned as a prophet? In whose reigns did he prophesy? Compare Hosea 1:1, and observe that the two prophets were contemporary.

History of the Period.

Turn again to 2 Kings 15-20 and refresh your recollection of the history of the period. Little attention need be given to Uzziah's reign because the prophet began his work near its close (Isa. 6:1). The chief event in Jotham's reign was the military combination of Syria and Israel against Judah. The reign of Ahaz is chiefly notable for his confederacy with Assyria against these combined enemies. This confederacy proved nearly as fatal to Judah in the end as it had to Israel formerly in the time of Menahem. From a friend Assyria soon turned to be an enemy, destroying many cities of Judah, and prevented from capturing Jerusalem itself in the reign of Hezekiah, only by the supernatural interposition of God. See 2 Kings 18-19. In the reign of Hezekiah the political situation is precisely reversed, and through the faith and piety of that good monarch, Jehovah is honored and Assyria is overcome. An acquaintence with these facts, especially those in the time of Ahaz, is necessary to the elucidation of certain discourses of the prophet, especially in his earlier chapters.

Discourses Concerning Judah.

The discourses in this division of the book are similar in character to those already considered in the previous prophets. If we analyze one it will answer for all. The first discourse is generally thought to be comprehended in chapter 1. Observe the indictment against the people, verses 2-9, the threat, 10-15, the exhortation, 17-20, and the customary promise of purification and blessing, 25-27. The second discourse seems to cover chapters 2-4 inclusive, while the third in this section is in the nature of a parabolic song, chapter 5. Your attention is called again to the law of recurrence. For example, the space of time covered by the first discourse, is inclusive of all the discourses following. The point of view of its beginning is the prophet's own time, and that of its ending is the millenium. Within this same cycle the thought of all the subsequent discourses revolves. The Holy Spirit simply recurs to it again and again, in other connections, and for the purpose of emphasizing particular incidents or events intervening.

The Prophet's Call, 6.

We have spoken previously of the demand made on the prophets to announce their authority, and dwelt somewhat at length on the call of Amos. We now reach the similar circumstance in the history of Isaiah as described in chapter 6. When did he receive his call (verse 1)? Describe the vision in connection with it (1-4). What was the immediate effect upon the prophet (5)? What symbolizes the removal of his iniquity (6,7)? What is the particular language of his Divine call (8, first part)? In what words does he give utterance to his consecration (8, last part)? What is his commission (9, 10)? Is it encouraging or discouraging at first? Is it discouraging or encouraging in the end (11, 13)? It will thus be seen that the prophet's commission ends as the discourses usually end, in hope for the people. It will be desirable to read these concluding verses in the Revised Version. It is hardly necessary to suggest that this chapter offers a good opportunity for a Bible reading on the individual spiritual life. We have here the conviction of the sinner, his repentance and confession of sin, his forgiveness and cleansing, his call into the Master's service, his consecration of himself, and the character of the work he is expected to do.

Judah and Assyria, 7-9.

We here reach one of the most interesting discourses in the book, not only because of its historical features, but the one or two illustrations it affords of the law of double reference hitherto explained. Observe that the cause giving rise to it, 7:1, 2, is the war against Judah, and the latter's confederacy with Assyria, recorded more at length in 2 Kings 16. Observe the gracious and encouraging commission of the prophet to King Ahaz (3-9). Observe in connection with that commission another illustration of that object-teaching spoken of in Hosea. For example, the name of the prophet's son whom he takes with him is a synonym of hope (see definition in the margin). Observe further, the sign granted to Ahaz (10-16). It is here we have the first illus-

tration of the law of double reference (14). The virgin here referred to may in the first instance mean any ordinary maiden of Judah, subsequently to be married and give birth to a child. But it is evident from Matthew 1:23, that in the mind of the Holy Spirit it applied ultimately and completely only to Christ.

The prophet foresees the purpose of Ahaz to disregard Jehovah and pursue his own plans with Assyria, and in this connection gives utterance to a forecast of the punishment coming upon Judah in consequence (7:7-8:22). Observe that the nation on which they now leaned would become the means of their punishment (7:17-20). Observe the extent of that punishment (8:7, 8). Observe that nothing but the head, that is, the capitol of Judah would practically be left, and compare this with the fulfillment of the prophecy in Hezekiah's day when the Assyrians were defeated in their attack on Jerusalem. It is probable that the period of sorrow and darkness further predicted of the nation in the last verse of the chapter, may cover a long time subsequent to the Assyrian assault, including the Babylonian captivity, and the later afflictions of the Grecian period. This opinion seems justified by the continuation of the discourse in the next chapter.

The Promised Redeemer.

In the midst of this darkness for Judah, what is it the prophet sees in the distance (9:2)? How does he explain this figure of speech (3)? Read verse 3 as translated in the Revised Version. What would be the cause of this joy (4)? How does verse 5 (Revised Version) indicate that the reference is to the millenium? Through whom is this deliverance to be brought about (6, 7)? To whom do these verses apply (Luke 2:11)? It is proper to add that the fulfillment of this prophecy is generally applied in a spiritual sense to the growth and development of the Christian church, but that does not necessarily exclude the more literal fulfillment in an earthly kingdom yet to be set up with Judah as its center, and Christ on the throne.

Punishment of Assyria, 10-12.

Practically the rest of our lesson is taken up with discourses concerning the nations, predictive of coming judgments upon them for their sin, and especially their treatment of Judah. But the first of these discourses, that against Assyria, is so full and typical of the rest as to warrant consideration by itself.

The story is like this:—In the first place, God used Assyria to punish Judah, (10:5, 6). In the second place, Assyria's own wicked motive in the matter is revealed in verses 7-11. Then comes the threatened punishment on Assyria for her pride, (verses 12, 19). Following this we have the customary promise of deliverance, victory, and glory for Israel in the latter time, (chapter 10, verse 20, to chapter 12, verse 6). It should be noted that the names Israel, Judah, and house of Jacob in these chapters, are used interchangeably for the whole twelve tribes except where indicated otherwise.

Let us analyze this last part of the prophecy concerning the future of Israel. Observe their promised conversion (10: 20-23); the punishment of their enemies (24-34); and the connection of both with the coming of the Messiah (chapter 11). Observe that the reference to the Messiah is millennial, and points to His second coming. Read the first nine verses of chapter 11. Observe further in corroboration of this, that the time synchronizes with a future restoration of the people to their land, and the union again of the two kingdoms in one (verses 10-13). Observe also the miraculous intervention of God in bringing this about (verses 15, 16), and the joyful thanksgiving of the redeemed people in that day (chapter 12).

This prophecy furnishes a striking illustration of the peculiarity of the prophetic writings spoken of in an earlier lesson, namely, that they saw the future in space rather than in time. To quote another's language, "When you look from a height on a landscape, hills seem close together which are really wide apart; so in the foretelling of events, the order, succession and grouping are presented, but the intervals of time are overlooked." In the present instance the prophet covers a period of already more than 2,600 years, mentioning two or three great events, some fulfilled and some unfulfilled, with great lapses of time between them of which no mention is made, and yet the whole appears like a continuous and unbroken sequence.

Discourses Concerning the Nations, 13-27.

The discourse against Assyria is followed by a series of similar ones against all the representative Gentile nations that had come into like relations to Israel. Please scan chapters 13-23 for the names of these nations. It is proper to say, that in the judgment of some scholars, these predictions have not yet been completely fulfilled. This consideration involves the conclusion that some of these nations at least, are to experience a historical revival before the end of the present age. This is thought to be true especially of Babylon, which one school of prophecy regards as the future seat of the anti-Christ. Those who would like to read further on this subject will find a book entitled "Babylon and Egypt," by B. W. Newton, very interesting. It is published by Houlston and Sons, London, but copies may possibly be obtained of the Bible Institute Colportage Association, Chicago, or the American Baptist Publication Society, Boston. The perusal of the prophecy concerning Babylon, chapters 13-14, is worthy of the closest attention even as

literature. The scope and grandeur of its imagery is unequalled. Dante's "Divine Comedy," and Goethe's "Faust" are the nearest suggestion of an approach to it, but were inspired by and copied from it. Special interest attaches to the description of Lucifer in chapter 14, which some regard as a description of the future anti-Christ. Attention is called to the fact that, as in all the other instances, after the prophet has concluded his denunciation of the enemies of Israel he brings his discourse or discourses to a grand climax by predicting the ultimate triumph and blessing of the people of God. In this instance the discourses against the nations are grouped together in the chapters already indicated, and in like manner the promises for Israel (or Judah) are grouped together at the end, like the finale of an oratorio. Read from chapter 24, verse 21, to the close of chapter 27.

The Concluding Chapters, 28-35.

Little need be added concerning the concluding chapters of our lesson. Chapter 27 is a discourse concerning Israel under the name of Ephraim, that is, the ten tribes as distinguished from Judah. It contains a notable Messianic prophecy. Read verse 16, in connection with the marginal references. Chapter 29 seems to be a discourse against Jerusalem exclusively. Chapters 30-31 warn Judah against any future alliance with Egypt like that with Assyria in the time of Ahaz. We shall see from the study of Jeremiah that this warning was not heeded, while the prediction it contains was literally fulfilled. Chapters 32-35 correspond to chapters 25-27, and, according to the law of recurrence, repeat once more the future promises for Israel.

The Next Lesson.

will be chapters 40-66. It will be seen that we omit chapters 36-39; but as these give a supplemental history of Hezekiah's reign already considered in 2 Kings, and are not distinctly prophetic, they do not call for consideration here. The Word Outline of the book will be reserved for the concluding lesson next week.

REVIEW of the last lesson:

1. In whose reign did Isaiah begin to prophecy?

2. Give the chief events in the two succeeding reigns.

3. What chapter contains the prophet's call?

4. With what period of Judah's history do chapters 7-9 deal?

5. What law of rhetoric is especially illustrated here?

6. What heathen nation is specially dealt with in chapters 10-12?

7. What great heathen nation is expected by some to experience a historical revival?

8. What chapter is supposed to contain a description of the Anti-Christ?

9. What future political alliance is Judah warned against?

The New Lesson.

In the judgment of some critics that part of Isaiah now entered upon is so different in style from the former part, as to justify the thought of another author, a second Isaiah. But it is not within the scope of these lessons to go into that question. Jesus seems to have known but one Isaiah, and His example is sufficiently satisfying for us. However, the difference in style may be explained by the difference in subject, for while the first part of the book deals chiefly with the prophet's own time, the last part is almost entirely millenial. Nor is the difference in style so very radical after all. Those who have now read the whole book synthetically, will recognize the same style in the earlier millenial chapters like 11, 25, and 35, as in these later ones. This is certainly true in the English translation, and all scholars are agreed that it is a faithful transcript, (especially the Revised Version), of the Hebrew.

The Prophet's Point of View.

Read carefully the first two verses of chapter 40, and observe that the prophet's thought is resting far into the future. He sees Jerusalem restored, purified, comforted and at rest. This has not yet taken place, and in the light of what we have already learned as to the scope of the prophet's vision there can be no doubt that it refers to the millenial period, coincident, as shown in the earlier chapters, (especially 11), with the second coming of Christ.

From this point to the end of the book the prophet seems to be dwelling very largely upon the intervening events which, in a sense, more forward toward the millenium. He mentions what must come to pass before the millenium appears. Or, to change the thought somewhat, let us imagine that the whole of these last 27 chapters were simply one discourse; the text, chapter 40:1, 2; the theme, comfort; the remainder, the several divisions of that theme. This, I think, will be the simplest and easiest way of studying the lesson, and bring about as good results as any. If we had not gone pretty thoroughly into the study of the first part of the book, such a plan might be venturesome in taking too much for granted: but as it is, it will doubtless be found interesting and spiritually quickening, and also leave on the mind a very good impression of the contents and character of the whole book. Please understand, it is not affirmed that these 27 chapters did constitute one discourse originally, but we are only accomodating them to such an idea for present purposes. Our theme then is "Comfort," comfort for Jerusalem, for Judah, for the people of God in the latter days; and the question arises, What are the elements of that comfort, what is it that God commissions His prophet to say to the people calculated to awaken hope, and quicken their expectation of that promised time?

Elements of Comfort.

1. The first of these "elements of comfort" is the Divine care over scattered Israel at the present time. Let us imagine Israel doubting the glowing prognostication of the prophet on the ground of their weak, scattered and persecuted condition, and saying that God had forgotten them and His promise would not be fulfilled. Now read chapter 40:9-26, in which the prophet enlarges upon the greatness and omnipotence of God, applying it to show that under the circumstances Israel could not be forgotten by Him, verses 27-31. The same thought is expressed in other places, notably chapter 43.

2. The second of these "elements of comfort" may be described as the ultimate triumph of Israel over their enemies. The nation might be represented as still questioning the possibility of the prophet's words on the ground of the vastness and strength of their enemies. Look now at chapter 41, beginning at about verse 10, for the evidence that these would be overcome by them through the power of God. The same thought is repeated in other chapters, particularly 51-52.

3. A third element is the ministry of the Messiah. If doubt still existed in their minds as to the ground on which this care for and defence of them might be predicated, it is now shown to arise through the Person and work of that Anointed One to whom gave all the prophets witness. Read chapter 42, specially the opening verses, and compare them with chapters 49:1-12, 50:4-11, and most particularly, 52:13-53:12. It is the suffering substitute Savior who would bring it about and make it to be possible, in the bearing away of their sin.

4. A fourth element is the outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon them. They might still be perplexed in the acceptance of these promises on the ground of their own inward unworthiness and indifference toward God as a nation. To meet this the office of the Holy Spirit is referred to, chapter 44, verses 1-8. These verses should be read in connection with the last part of the preceding chapter to appreciate their full significance and value. It will be seen that as a result of this freshening grace the nation will revive, and there will be an eagerness to turn to the Lord and confess His name. The same thought is expressed in chapter 32, verses 14-20.

5. A fifth element is the particularization of their return from Babylon, chapters 44, 45. This event, though far in advance of the millenium, might be regarded as a pledge of the fulfillment of the prophecies bearing upon that time; and awaken hope and minister comfort in the later and darker days of the present time for example, on the basis of the principle in Romans 5:3, 4.

6. A sixth element is the ultimate punishment of that strong and ancient enemy Babylon, type of every other enemy, chapters 46-48. Sufficient space has been given to the consideration of this topic in the first part of the book.

The Ultimate Restoration.

7. The seventh and culminating element is the picture drawn by the prophet of their final restoration to the land, and the increased prosperity and blessing forever resting upon them. See 49:13-26; 54; 55; 60; 62; 65; 66. It will require but a cursory examination of these chapters to discover such facts as the following, which are referred to again and again in different connections, for example:

(a). The restoration is to be brought about by the aid of the Gentiles (49:22).

(b). The nation's boundaries are to be greatly enlarged as well as its population (49:18-21).

(c). It is in some way to have dominion over the other nations (60:12).

(d). Its possession of the land is to be perpetual (60:21).

(e). It is to be an object not only glorifying to God, but in which He Himself shall find joy (65:19).

The Word Outline.

The Word Outline of this book is more than usually necessary to assist in keeping its leading facts in mind, because of its length and somewhat intricate nature. Let us put it together in this way:

I. The Prophet.
   - (a). Field, Judah, 1:1.
   - (b). Period, Uzziah to Hezekiah, 1:1.
   - (c). Call, vision in the last year of Uzziah, 6:1.

II. The Nation.
   - (a). Jotham's reign opposed by Syria and Israel.
   - (b). Ahaz's reign, turning to Assyria, and forsaking God.
   - (c). Hezekiah's reign, turning to God, and overcoming Assyria.

III. The Book.

Part I. 1-35.

- (a). General discourses, 1-5.
- (b). Prophet's call, 6.
- (c). Judah and Assyria, 7-9.
- (d). Gentile nations, 10-27.
- (e). Israel, 28.
- (f). Judah and Egypt, 29-35.

Part II. 36-39.

Historical supplement. Review of Hezekiah's reign.

Part III. 40-66.

Discourses chiefly millennial. Theme, comfort.

The Messianic Prophecies.

In our study of the earlier historical books of the Bible, very particular attention was drawn to the prophecies of Christ contained in each one of them. This it is impossible to do with all the later books because of the multiplicity of such prophecies—some hundreds of them indeed. Only the principal ones, and those coming in the direct course of our synthetic outline can be noted. But one feature of them should be again mentioned, and that is, not only the way in which they increase in number, but develop in details.

The lines of the portrait are becoming more and more clearly defined with every touch of the Divine Artist's pencil. The seed of the woman became the seed of Abraham, and the line of Judah, in Genesis. Deuteronomy spoke of Him as a prophet like unto Moses; Samuel described Him as a King sitting on the throne of His father David. And now Isaiah pictures Him in so many ways! He gives His virgin birth, His two-fold nature, His many names, human and Divine, His mission to Gentiles as well as Jews, His humiliation and His glory. It is hoped that the individual student, and especially the teacher of classes will fix earnest attention on this matter as so essential to the knowledge of the Savior's Person and work, an acquaintance with the teachings of the New Testament to follow, and as an armory from which to draw ammunition for the defense of the truth of the Bible and Christianity. If these things were spoken before they came to pass they must be Divine in their origin. If they meet and find fulfillment in Jesus of Nazareth and in Him only, He must be the Son of God and the Redeemer of the world.

The Next Lesson.

will be Jeremiah 1-44. This is a long lesson, but it is difficult of division. The chapters in Jeremiah are not arranged chronologically, and hence the different events must be picked up here and there without reference to any orderly arrangement in the book. We will spend two weeks in the study of it, so that if the class is not able to read it in advance more than once or twice for the first week, it will be a satisfaction to know that they can pursue the theme into the following one, and doubtless with still greater interest.

REVIEW of the last lesson:

1. What criticism is made about the last part of Isaiah?

2. What may account to a great extent for any difference in style from the first part?

3. What is the prophet's point of view?

4. What is his theme, and wherein is it stated?

5. State the seven "elements of comfort" referred to.

6. What five particulars are mentioned under the last "element?"

7. Give the Word Outline of the whole book under the three heads, the prophet, the nation and the book.

The New Lesson.

Examine Jeremiah 1:1-3, for a personal introduction to the prophet and the time in which he prophesied. What was his father's name? His office? Birthplace? Though Anathoth was "in the land of Benjamin," to what tribe must our prophet have belonged judging by his official status? In whose reign did he begin to prophesy, and how long did he continue? To which kingdom was he commissioned, Israel or Judah? Was Israel in captivity at this time? To which of the historical books would you refer for an answer to the last question?

The Period of the Prophet.

Review 2 Kings 22-25 for the history of Jeremiah's time. How old was Josiah when he came to the throne? Of what conspiracy was he the victim in his infancy? What religious event characterized his reign? What discovery aided in the promotion of the revival? How did he meet his death? What nation thereafter controlled Judah for a while? Who was Josiah's immediate successor, and what was his history? Whom did Egypt then put on the throne? How long did he reign? To what other nation did Judah then become tributary? What representative men were taken into captivity by Babylon at this time? See Daniel 1. Who succeeded Jehoiakim, and what was his history? Observe the other names by which this king was also known. See margin. Whom did Babylon now place on the throne? Was he loyal or disloyal to his political master? After the captivity who was placed in charge of the remnant, and what was his history?

His Character and Mission.

Perhaps we had better consider the prophet's mission before we speak of his character. It was the Divine purpose to punish Judah for her sins by putting her under subjection to Babylon. But this purpose of Babylonian supremacy embraced more than Judah, and included indeed all the nations of the earth. See Daniel 2:36-40. Now was to begin what is commonly known afterwards as "the times of the Gentiles," the meaning and significance of which will be treated of in the study of Daniel. Suffice for the present to say, that God's will for Judah was to submit to her enemy, in which event it would go well with her, but otherwise ill. Jeremiah was commissioned to make this will known, but in doing so was obliged to face a nation angrily opposed to such a conception. Kings, princes, priests and people were opposed to it. And there were false prophets among them that taught the very contrary to Jeremiah. As he pleaded with them to submit that they might abide in peace, or warned them that conspiracy against Babylon meant certain destruction and captivity, these others said, "Nay, enter into confederacy with Egypt and other nations, and you will overcome Babylon and break her yoke from off your neck." To the false prophets they hearkened with the results we know. But the hatred thus engendered against Jeremiah was intense in the extreme, and made his life the unhappiest of all the prophets.

His personal character, or temperament, seemed, moreover, ill-adapted to face and endure such a contest. He appears to have been naturally diffident and weak. God is several times obliged to stimulate him, not more with comfort than with sharpened threatening. But Jeremiah is loyal. He is thus kept loyal. No matter how weak and pleading he appears when in the presence of God alone, nevertheless, standing before the leaders of the nation, for the time his enemies as well as the enemies of God, he is brave as a lion, and commanding as a general in the field. It is the study of these changing conditions in the prophet's life that to many gives the keenest interest in the book. Jeremiah is very human, very much like one of us, and God's gracious and kindly dealings with him are a wonderful revelation of His love and power to us that believe.

Arrangement of the Book.

Your reading of Jeremiah has substantiated the remark in the last lesson that its chapters are not arranged chronologically. Some of the earlier chapters relate later events than some of the later ones, and contrariwise. This makes it impossible to carry our synopsis through chapter by chapter, or section by section as in most of the other cases. We shall therefore adopt another plan, and while going through the book in the order of the chapters, select first the leading events in the personal history of the prophet, and secondly, the leading prophecies regarding Judah and the nations. The present lesson will be devoted to the prophet personally.

The Prophet's Call, 1.

Observe that the call was really prenatal (1:4, 5), suggesting Isaiah 45:1-6, which please compare. What earlier and greater teacher of Israel is brought to

mind by Jeremiah's hesitation (6, 7)? How does verse 8 illustrate Jeremiah's weakness of character? How does verse 9 illustrate the doctrine of inspiration? From what general direction would the earthly judgments against Judah proceed (13-15)? How is Jeremiah both warned and encouraged (17-19)? What four classes of antagonists to him are named?

Unneighborly Treatment, 11-12.

Jeremiah seems to have begun his work as a prophet right in his own home, and to have verified the saying that such are without honor there (11:18-23). What punishment is pronounced against Anathoth for this conduct? How is Jeremiah personally affected by this persecution (12: 1-3)? What other book of the Old Testament does this lament naturally recall? Compare also Psalm 73. How does Jehovah strengthen the spirit of Jeremiah in this case, by promising future immunity, or increasing his burden (5)? In his own town of Anathoth he had been like one running a race with footmen so far as his persecutions were concerned, but later on they would so increase that he would be like one racing with horses! There he was comparatively in a land of peace, but by-and-by he would be in the swellings of Jordan.

The Swellings of Jordan, 19, 20.

Jeremiah quickly comes to know the meaning of that figure of speech when he reaches the center of things at Jerusalem, and begins to announce his unpopular messages in the very face of the priesthood and court (19:14, 15). Who resents his words, and in what manner is the prophet humiliated (20:1, 2)? What shows the boldness of the prophet in dealing with his enemies and God's (3-6)? What shows his weakness and despair when alone with God (7-13)? We have a striking illustration here of the way in which God maintained Jeremiah's faithfulness. He placed him between two "Can nots," or, if you please, between two fires. There was the fire of persecution without, and that of the Holy Spirit within, the latter being the hotter of the two. To avoid being consumed by the one, he was more than willing to walk through the other. "I can not speak any more in God's name," he says at one time, and follows it by adding, "I can not refrain from speaking." How many prophets in our own day have known a similar experience to that in verse 9! Who seemed to be his most serious opponents, open enemies or professed friends (10)? Did God leave His servant in this gloomy despair (11)? Why did He not leave him there (12)? How does Jeremiah testify of deliverance (13)?

Escape from Death, 26.

In whose reign did the events in this chapter occur? In what public place was the prophecy delivered? What effect did it produce (8, 9)? Who were the instigators against Jeremiah at this time (11)? Who were his defenders (16)? What precedent was quoted in his favor (17-19)? What contemporaneous event emphasizes his narrow escape (20-23)? Who was raised up of God as his deliverer (24)? How does this escape of Jeremiah bear out the promise in chapter 1:18, 19?

Controversies with False Prophets, 28-29.

It has been evident as you read this book that one of the most trying experiences of Jeremiah was the contentions engendered by false prophets. These wolves in sheep's clothing have always been the bane of faithful shepherds, and it will comfort some of us in the thick of the conflict with them today to know, from Jeremiah's history, that no temptation has happened to us but such as is common to man. It will also quicken our courage and sharpen our wits in dealing with them to perceive the course of proceedure in this case, directed as it was by the mind of God Himself. Take chapter 28, for example. In whose reign did the event occur? What is the name of the false prophet mentioned? How did he seek to make the most of his opportunity? Does he attack God's servant privately or publicly? How does he contradict his teaching (2-4)? How does Jeremiah reply (5-9)? How does Hananiah seek to further emphasize his false prophecy (10-11)? How does God assure Jeremiah (12-14)? In what way does Jeremiah, thus assured, return to the battle (15)? What infliction comes upon the false prophet (16, 17)?

Take chapter 29. What gives rise to the opposition in this case (1)? What instalment of the captives is referred to (2)? By whom was this letter sent to the captives (3)? What was its general tenor (4-7)? Against whom were they warned (8, 9)? What specific promise is given (10-14)? Which will fare the worst, the captives at this time in Babylon, or the Jews still dwelling in their own land (15-19)? What judgment is pronounced against the false prophets (20-23)? What prophet is especially singled out for reprobation (24-32)? What had been the specific character of his offense (25-28)? How did Jeremiah come to hear of this letter (29)? What punishment is pronounced against Shemaiah (30-32)?

In the Dungeon, 37-38.

This is not the first imprisonment of the prophet of which we are now to speak, as you will recall by looking at chapters 32 and 36. Each of these chapters speak of earlier imprisonments, one in Jehoiakim's reign and the other in Zedekiah's, although it is possible that the last-named synchronizes with this. What event gave a critical significance to this period (5)? How came Jeremiah to de-

liver this prophecy (3)? What was its nature (7-10)? What led to the prophet's arrest (11-15)? What shows the timidity and vacillation of the king (16-38:6)? Who proved the prophet's friend at this crisis (7-13)? What private instruction has Jeremiah to give the king (14-28)?

Liberty 39-43.

How was Jeremiah treated by the captors of Jerusalem (39:11-14)? What privilege was granted him (40:2-6)? It must be kept in mind as explanatory of Nebuchadnezzar's action in this matter that he was well aware of Jeremiah's counsel to the Jews in his favor. As we have seen, Daniel was at this time in his court, and had doubtless given him the information or word from Jehovah concerning his supremacy of the nations. All who would have surrendered themselves to him, as did the prophet, would have been treated similarly, no doubt.

After the slaying of Gedaliah, what is the purpose of the conspirators? In what way do they seek to use Jeremiah for their purposes (42)? How do they insult Jehovah through His prophet (43:1-4)? Where finally is Jeremiah carried against his will (5-7)?

The Next Lesson

will be the conclusion of the book of Jeremiah. You will please read the same chapters as before, with the view of fastening attention not so much upon the prophet himself this time, as upon the nation and the prophecies concerning it. It might be well also to add to the lesson the concluding chapters, 45-52, of which we may be able to say a word.

REVIEW of the last lesson:

1. To what tribe did Jeremiah belong?
2. Name the kings of Judah of his period.
3. How would you state his mission to Judah?
4. How would you describe his character or temperament?
5. What peculiarity is noticeable in the arrangement of this book?
6. What most impresses you in connection with Jeremiah's call?
7. Where does he seem to have met the earliest opposition?
8. How was his faithfulness maintained?
9. From what source did much of his conflict arise?
10. In whose reign did he meet with his dungeon experiences?
11. In what country is he found at the last?

The New Lesson.

In the last lesson we considered the personal history of the prophet, but in this we are to deal with the leading prophecies or discourses concerning Judah and the nations. Those in the first part of the book are very much like the ones already looked at in the preceding book. —pleading with the people (chapter 3), charging iniquity on them (7), threatening punishment (8), counselling them (10). The tenderness of expression in some parts of these chapters, you will agree, is unsurpassed by anything yet met with, and equalled only, if at all, by Hosea.

You have observed that Jeremiah is led very often in the line of object-teaching hitherto spoken of. The types and symbols employed, although numerous, are usually explained in the text, so that little need be said of them here. But it will be well to become particularly acquainted with the titles of some of them at least. The leading figures are:

The linen girdle, 13.
The bottle of wine, 13.
The potter and the clay, 18.
The earthern vessel, 19.
The good and bad figs, 24.
The bonds and yokes, 27.
The purchase of the field, 32.
The obedience of the Rechabites, 35.
The stones in the clay, 44.
The sunken book, 51.

Intercession of Judah, 14-15.

One of the most affecting incidents in this book is Jeremiah's intercession for Judah during the famine. It is at the same time one of the most dramatic. It may be debated whether it should not have been considered in the first half of our lesson, which dealt with the personal history of the prophet, and yet it pertains equally to the present thought. No attempt will be made at exposition, but as an example of the dialogue form of instruction not infrequently employed in the prophets, the chapters may be outlined thus:

The general statement of the case, 14:1-6.
The prophet speaks, 14:7-9.
JEHOVAH speaks, 14:10-12.
The prophet, 14:13.
JEHOVAH, 14:14-18.
The Prophet, 14:19-22.
JEHOVAH, 15:1-9.
The prophet, 15:10.
JEHOVAH, 15:11-14.
The prophet, 15:15-18.
JEHOVAH, 15:19-21.

Attention may judiciously be called to two or three especially interesting features. For example, the name of God, verse 8, so descriptive of His loving kindness. The responsibility Jeremiah seeks to cast on the false prophets, and its division between the prophets and people which God Himself makes, verse 13-16. The character of the claim which Jeremiah makes on Jehovah, "For Thy name's sake do not disgrace the throne of Thy glory," verse 21. The distinction which God makes as to the relative power of His servants in intercession (15:1). The repetition of His early promises to Jeremiah (20-21), and the condition on which His continued use of him in His service is based (19). Much spiritual nutriment for any one of us is found in these things, and young preachers will discover them to be rich mines of homiletic ore.

The Great Prophecies.

To come more directly to the great prophecies peculiar to Jeremiah, the first may be designated as that of the Chaldean (or Babylonian) supremacy, chapter 21. Observe the circumstances under which it was delivered, verses 1, 2; and the plain unsparing terms in which it is uttered, 3-7; as well as the simple but momentous choice set before the people, 8-10. Compare also chapter 2:7.

A second of these prophecies relates to the coming of the Messiah, chapter 23. With what charge does it begin (1, 2,)? What two distinct promises are given in verses 3 and 4? How does the allusion to the coming faithful shepherds at the restoration lead up to the mention of the Chief Shepherd, verses 5 and 6? How is He designated in verse 5? And more especially in verse 6? What is the Hebrew word for "The Lord our righteousness," as given in the margin? What expression in verse 8 would indicate the application of the whole to refer not to the return from Babylon so much as to the future millenial period? How does the discourse continue to enlarge upon the charge against the false prophets (9-40)?

A third specifically indicates the period of the Babylonian captivity, 25. It consists, as you have doubtless perceived, of several parts:

(1). The indictment against the people, 1-7.

(2). The judgment pronounced against them, 8-11.

(3). The ultimate vengeance on Babylon, 12-14.

(4). The expansion of that vengeance upon the family of nations, 15-33

It is difficult to comprehend this last except as applying to some period of time yet future. As to this, moreover, there will be yet clearer intimations in the prophets to follow. Note especially in the prophecy the precise period of 70 years as the limit of the Babylonian captivity, and the time when it began to be reckoned, as indicated in verse 1. Compare 2 Kings 23 for the particular year, (606 B. C.).

This chapter should be read conjunctively with the twenty-ninth, which speaks of precisely the same subject, but suggested by a different circumstance. What was that circumstance (29:1)? For what particular cause was this letter written (4-7)? Who were responsible for the spirit of unrest manifested by this early instalment of the captives in Babylon (8, 9)? What plain promise does God give them (10)? What is His feeling toward them as compared with the bulk of the nation still in Judea (10-14)? Compare these last-named verses with the figure of the good and bad figs, chapter 24 What punishment is pronounced against the false prophets who misled them (29: 15-32)?

A fourth of the great prophecies refers to

The Future Restoration, 30-33.

and while it is a subject with which we are already quite familiar, yet the length of this discourse, to say nothing of its own distinctive peculiarities, warrants our giving it very close attention. Perhaps the most helpful method of treatment will be the interrogatory one as heretofore.

What is the first fact which distinguishes it from some other discourses (30:2)? Why is its Divine Author so particular about its form (3)? What experience for Israel must precede the restoration spoken of (5-9)? How is Israel distinguished from the Gentile nations in this respect (11)? Have we met with similar declarations to this in the former prophets? Name those prophets. The words of what other prophet especially are brought to mind by verses 18-22? When is this event to take place (24)?

Does this glad promise apply only to Judah, or the twelve tribes generally (31: 1)? What is the ground of this promised goodness (3)? What will again be the center of worship in that day (6)? What indicates that it is more than the return from Babylon that is referred to (8)? What further substantiates the opinion that the time is still future (12-14)? What shows that it shall be preceded by the repentance of the people (18-20)? What shows that it will usher in a new dispensation (31-34)? With what oath does God confirm this promise (35-37)? How is the promise for the people identified with the land (38-40)?

The class must have been impressed by the fact that these two things always go together in these prophecies, viz: the people and the land. The people, i. e., the nation, is to be restored and restored to the old land. One would think that statesmen and diplomats, and writers on international subjects in these days, discussing the "Eastern question," would take more cognizance of this fact. Observe how this fact is further impressed on the attention by chapter 32. I do not say that this chapter is a continuation of the preceding in matter of time, but it assuredly is in thought. Observe the introductory incident in verses 6-15, paying particular attention to the care shown by the prophet in witnessing the transaction referred to (12), and the reason for it all. It might, at first, be thought that this "reason" had a bearing only on what took place after the return from Babylon, but the sequel points very markedly to the future.

Jeremiah, for example, does not comprehend what he has been called upon to do in this case. Observe the surprise he expresses that, under all the circumstances, he should have been asked by God to purchase the field, and the inquiry he advances (16-25). Study God's reply to His servant (26-44). What significant question does He raise, verse 27? Has He changed His purpose about punishing Judah (28-35)? Nevertheless, what will be the ultimate outcome of that purpose (36-38)? What language (verse 37) shows that more than a re-gathering from Babylon is contemplated? What shows their conversion previous to the later blessing (39)? What shows the perpetuity of their final return to God (40)? What shows that the blessing is associated with the land (41)? What shows the pertinency of the purchase of the field as a pre-figurement of that blessed day (43-44)?

The last of these four chapters which we have treated as one discourse because of similarity of subject, is practically the same as all the rest. The four taken together furnish another illustration of the law of recurrence. What expectation is set before the prophet, verse 3? To what subject do these "great and mighty things" refer (4)? What is promised to the city of Jerusalem (6)? When will it be fulfilled (7)? What spiritual blessing will precede the temporal one (8)? How does verse 11 correspond with Isaiah 12? Is this blessing for one or both of the kingdoms? What shows that it will take place in connection with the second coming of Christ (15, 16)? In what chapter have we met with a similar prophecy?

With what oaths does God confirm this promise (19-21, 25, 26)?

A fifth prophecy peculiar to Jeremiah refers to

The Remnant in Egypt, 42-45.

The events leading up to it were partially considered in our former lesson. After the assassination of Gedaliah, (whom the king of Babylon had made governor of Judea following the captivity), the remnant of the Jews through fear, desired to flee into Egypt, and consulted the prophet about it (chapters 40-41). What was the revealed will of God in the matter (42:7-18)? Were the people disposed to obedience or disobedience (43: 1-7)? How did their conduct in Egypt compare with their previous history in Judah (44:1-10)? What affliction is now pronounced against them (11-14)? Does this result in penitence (15-19)? What is Jehovah's final word to them by the prophet (20-30)?

The last of the prophecies of Jeremiah will be summed up under the general head of the

Discourses Against the Nations, 46-51.

Of course, as we have learned previously, "the nations" is a distinctive term referring to the Gentiles. Please re-examine these chapters and identify the nations referred to. While the predictions concerning them are practically the same as in the other prophets, yet there are certain utterances to which attention should be especially called. Note, for example, the prediction of the revival of Moab in the latter days (48:47). And also Ammon (49:6). Do you recall the origin of these peoples, and their relation to Israel? If forgotten, bring your concordance or Bible dictionary into use. Note also that a similar prediction holds good for Elam (Persia), (49:39). It is remarkable, however, that while these old nations are to be revived, nothing is said as to their forgiveness and future blessing as in the case of Israel. The allusion to their revival nevertheless, brings up again what was called to the attention of the class in an earlier lesson about Babylon. It will not do to dogmatize concerning unfulfilled prophecy, but no one can read these predictions about the nations of the East, without feeling a new wave of interest in the history of current affairs in that direction. Mr. Spurgeon was wont to say that he read the newspapers to see how his Father was governing the world; and there is a sense in which no man can so intelligently peruse the accounts of what is going on among the nations of the earth, as he who is informed in the contents of the Word of God. The secret of the Lord is with them that fear Him.

Note the particular attention Jeremiah gives to Babylon (50-51). Let us be careful not to wed ourselves to any theory about the matter, but let us also keep our minds open to receive instruction, no matter how strange it may appear. On the supposition that Babylon is to experience a revival, from what direction will her final foe appear (50:1-3)? What indicates that this does refer to a period yet future (4, 5)? What shows that the ultimate downfall of Babylon will be the result of a great military combination (9, 41-46)? Without spending more time on the minute analysis of these chapters the subject might be summed up by saying, that those who believe the prophets teach a revival of Babylon, call attention to such facts as these:—(a), the circumstances attending the downfall of Babylon pre-figured in this and other places, are not those which accompanied the taking of that kingdom by the Medes and Persians in the sixth century, B. C. (b), the absolutely forsaken and loathed condition in which Babylon is here represented to be left forever, is not that of the period that followed her conquest by the Medes and Persians, (c), the king of Babylon reigning over her at the time of her final destruction is one who for greatness has not yet appeared, judging from his description in Isaiah (see lesson 1 in that book). (d). The conquest of Babylon by the Medes and Persians was not co-incident with such blessing to the Jews, temporal and spiritual, as is spoken of in these prophecies as certain to eventuate. (e), there are many and strong points of resemblance between these predictions concerning Babylon and those of the Apocalypse (chapters 17 and 18), which are generally supposed to synchronize with the close of this age and the introduction of the millenium.

This indeed is a very rough and off-hand statement of their side of the case, but may answer to awaken our minds on the theme if we have given it no attention hitherto. If these things are so, surely "there's a Divinity that shapes our ends" in all now going on in India, China, Russia, Persia, Japan, Africa, Egypt and the Philippines?

The Word Outline.

We may sum up our two lessons in Jeremiah thus:

I. The personal history of the prophet.
   a. Genealogy and period, 1:1-3.
   b. Call and commission, 1:4-19.
   c. Persecution, 11, 12, 19, 20, 26, 37.
   d. Deliverance of Nebuchadnezzar, 39-40.
   e. Carried into Egypt, 41-43.

II. The great prophecies.
   a. The Chaldean supremacy, 21, 27.
   b. The coming of the Messiah, 23, 32.
   c. The Babylonian captivity, 25, 29.
   d. The future restoration, 30, 33.
   e. The Egyptian remnant, 42-44.
   f. The Gentile nations, 46-51.

The next lesson will be Ezekiel 1-32.

REVIEW of the last lesson:

1. With what other prophet does Jeremiah compare in tenderness?

2. For what peculiarity of style is he conspicuous?

3. What is described as one of the most affecting incidents in the book?

4. Name the great prophecies.

5. Which chapters contain a reference to the Messiah, and by what two names is He called?

6. When did the 70 years of captivity begin to be reckoned?

7. What chapters deal particularly with the future restoration?

8. What two subjects usually go together in these prophecies of Israel's future?

9. What particular "object-lesson" is found in chapter 32?

10. The revival of what Gentile nations is predicted?

The New Lesson.

While Jeremiah was prophesying in Judea Ezekiel was doing the same in Babylon (or Chaldea). He seems to have been deported with the second company of captives in the reign of Jehoiachin. Compare Ezekiel 1:1, 2, with 2 Kings 24:8-16.

His name means "God is strong," or "God is hard," and suggests the official character of his mission. See chapter 3: 8, 9. Whether it was his natural name or not is an undetermined question. It may have been given him at the time of his prophetic call as indicating the nature of the work he had to do. We have seen a somewhat similar purpose in names in other of the books of the prophets. Can you recall which books?

In accordance with his name we find the character of Ezekiel to be stern and inflexible as compared with Jeremiah, for example. The latter was strongly influenced in his ministry by sympathy for his suffering people, the latter by his zeal for God. Not that either did not possess both characteristics, but a careful comparative study of the two men will show that the features spoken of were the predominating ones in each.

What does verse 3 of chapter 1 tell us of the personal history of Ezekiel? What was his official station other than prophet? To which tribe, therefore, did he belong? What was his father's name? Where was he located at this time? The river Chebar is identified in Upper Mesopotamia. What further feature of his personal history is given in chapter 24: 15-18? Was Jeremiah a married man? And if not, why not? Jeremiah 16:1-4.

A comparison of chapter 40:1 with the opening verses of the book shows that Ezekiel prophesied a long period. What is the date of the last prophecy recorded?

Divisions of the Book.

There seem to be four natural divisions of the book, as follows:—1-24; 25-32; 33-39; 40-48.

The first consists of prophecies of the usual character in strict chronological order, up until the final destruction of Jerusalem. The nation is charged with sin, and, in perfect agreement with the teachings of Jeremiah, is shown the hopelessness of every effort to shake off the Babylonish yoke, especially through any confederacy with Egypt. The second part is, in a sense, parenthetic, and consists of discourses against the nations. These are not grouped chronologically perhaps, but in accordance with a kind of moral unity. The third part is related to Israel again, and is composed of discourses uttered after the destruction of Jerusalem. Like all the preceding prophets, Ezekiel in these discourses speaks chiefly of mercy, salvation and ultimate blessing and triumph for his people. Part four, which really belongs to part three perhaps, shows the return of the glory of God to the land, and the re-establishment of the sanctuary and the twelve-tribed nationality in the latter days, or rather in the coming age.

Part One, 1-24.

The first thing that impresses us in part one is the prophet's call and commission, chapters 1-3. The call is associated with a series of four symbolic visions (1:4-28), suggesting a like circumstance in connection with which other prophet? Let us note these visions:

Fire, 4.
Four living creatures, 5-14.
Wheels, 15-21.
Divine glory, 26-28.

Four visions, and yet but one vision, for it is evident that the first three are incident to the last. The interpretation of these visions is beyond the limits of these lessons, but one thing they seem easily to suggest, viz: that "a fresh storm-cloud of Divine indignation is about to burst on Judea out of the north, i. e., from Babylon." What effect did these visions produce on the prophet? What enduement of power was necessary to his reception of the Divine message (2:2)? What further symbolized that message (2:9-3:3)? Compare Revelation 10:1, 2, 8-11. To what part of Israel did his message particularly apply (3:11, 15)? What solemn responsibility is laid upon him (16-21)?

The next thing to dwell upon is the four symbolic representations of judgment, chapters 4-5. They are all self-explanatory, but it may be well to identify them by their names.

Tile, 4:1-3.
Posture, 4-8.
Diet, 9-17.
Hair, 5:1-17.

What other prophet deals very largely in types and symbols of the same character?

Let us pass over the two discourses of rebuke in chapters 6 and 7, with whose general features we have become acquainted in the other books, and dwell for a moment on the

Visions of Idolatry, 8-14.

How long after his original call did this vision come to him? Where was he at the time, and who were in his company? What shows that it was a vision he beheld and not an actual journey he took (8:3)? Whither was he brought? How does the Revised Version indicate that it was the temple in Jerusalem that he visited? What is probably meant by "the image of jealousy?" Compare Jeremiah 7:30-34. Who were leaders in this trespass (11-12)? What particular form of idolatry is named in verse 16?

Was the whole city given up to this idolatry, or were there individual exceptions? See chapter 9. What symbolizes God's discrimination between the guilty and the guiltless in this matter (3-7)? What particular language in these verses illustrates the Divine knowledge of man's thoughts and feelings? What New Testament declaration is brought to mind in this act of discrimination? 2 Peter 2:9. Compare also Revelation 7 and 22:1-5. Also the last sentence of verse 6 with 1 Peter 4:17. It is very interesting and instructive to note these close parallels between the two Testaments, and young preachers will see the advantage to be gained in employing Old Testament texts when it is thus possible. They possess an element of freshness because less familiar to most audiences, and the graphic portrayals of which they form a part give them a picturesqueness that commands and holds attention.

I include chapters 10-14 in this division, not necessarily because they are parts of one discourse, but because of the unity of their subjects. To speak in general terms, they give us a preview of the penal consequences to follow the idolatry mentioned above. The different chapters treat of the application of those consequences to different classes. The city is especially mentioned in chapter 10, the princes, 11, the king, 12, the false prophets, 13, the followers of the false prophets, 14.

The Riddle of the Eagles and the Vine, 17.

As much of the subject-matter of this book is in its essence but a repetition of what we have gone over in the previous prophets, it is hardly necessary in a synthetic study to enlarge on details. Therefore passing over chapters 15 and 16, which, under the symbolism of the vine and the adulteress, describe anew the iniquity of Israel, let us dwell a moment on the significant riddle set before us in the following one. It will be recalled that Isaiah, chapters 30, 31, warned Judah against a future attempted alliance with Egypt as against Babylon. Jeremiah did the same, chapter 2:36, 37. Nevertheless, the prophets were unheeded, and the alliance was arranged only to the greater discomfiture of Judah however, as we saw in Jeremiah 37. It is to this rivalry as between Egypt and Babylon for Judah that Ezekiel's riddle applies.

As the chapter itself states, the first great eagle (1-6), is the king of Babylon whom God has made head of the Gentile imperial system, after Israel's rebellion. The cedar on Lebanon is royalty in Israel. Jehoiakin is the king of Judah described as the top-most bough carried into Babylon (a land of traffick, a city of merchants). The seed of the land planted in a fruitful field, is Zedekiah whom Nebuchadnezzar placed on the throne, and who might have flourished there had he submitted himself to God and rendered fealty to his Gentile Master. But he looked to Egypt, the second great eagle, for help. The king of Egypt contended with Nebuchadnezzar for the empire of the world. But since God had given it to the latter, it was rejection of God to turn to Pharoah (11-21). Hence God arraigns the king of Judah for his perfidy, and threatens the judgments that follow.

But as is so frequently the case, the chapter concludes with a prospect of brighter days in the future (22-24), and the Messiah in His kingdom is seen rightfully reigning over restored, pardoned,

The Siege of Jerusalem, 24.

In chapters 18-23 we have a group of six discourses of the usual character. They contain a Divine challenge to the nation, and a lamentation over her wickedness and ingratitude; an address to the elders, a review of the past and a promise for the future. Then we come to the concluding portion of the first part with several features of a dramatic character.

What is the date of this discourse? What occurred on this day to give it special significance? Israel was presuming on the indefeasibility of God's promises without heeding His will, and in the figure of the caldron filled with the pieces of flesh and the best bones He shows the indiscriminate judgment which should fall upon her (1-8). Jerusalem was the caldron and her inhabitants the flesh and bones. But even the city itself would be destroyed. This is set forth in "the emblem of the caldron set no longer with water, but empty on the coals, that its copper might glow, and its filthiness be smelt in its midst, and its scum be consumed." (9-14).

What terrible stroke is the prophet himself now called upon to feel (15-18)? What question did his conduct raise in the minds of the people? How was his act expounded? "What a picture of despair, when the sorrow lies too deep for tears, and an overwhelming sense of guilt compels men to abandon hope!" (20-23).

There was still one other matter in which the prophet was to be a sign to Israel, viz: silence for a period. It would appear that all during the siege which

lasted for three years, according to Jewish computation, the prophet had no message for his own people. Then it was, apparently, that the discourses against the Gentile nations were delivered. But from the time the siege began until it ended Ezekiel was dumb towards Israel. When he again began to speak to his own people it was in the language of cheer and hope after the manner of the closing chapters of Isaiah. Compare 3:26, 27; 24: 24-27; 29:21; 33:22.

Part Two, 25-32.

This part of the book has the same feature seen in all the prophets hitherto, viz: discourses concerning the Gentile nations. Which nations are named in chapter 25? Which of these, according to Jeremiah, are to have something corresponding to a historical revival? May it be, therefore, that part of these predictions is yet to have a fulfillment in their case? What is the stated cause of their judgment, (3, 6, 8, 12)? Observe how the inspired penman seizes upon the wickedly exultant spirit of these nations as shown in the expressions "Aha!" the clapping of the hands and stamping of the feet. How comforting and strengthening to the persecuted child of God to gather hence that God is not unmindful of what he is called upon to endure of the same nature, and that vengeance is His, and He will repay!

What great city is the object of the denunciations in the next three chapters? What is the cause assigned (26:1-3) How complete was her destruction to be (4, 5)? Who was to be the first and chief agent in the premises (7)? What effect would these judgments have upon neighboring and contemporaneous governments (15-18)? It is noticeable that it is commercial greed (2) which saw an opportunity of advantage in the disaster of Israel, rather than a spirit of pure and simple hostility that animated Tyre. And yet Jehovah punishes her just the same for that selfish covetousness which would profit by the downfall of His chosen people. Observe the "animated and striking picture of the commerce of Tyre" presented in chapter 27. The allegory is used, and Tyre is addressed personally. In verses 4-7 we have the figure of a ship peculiarly in keeping with the commercial character of the city . In verses 8-11 we have the crew, pilots, marines and guards. In verses 12-25 we have her foreign trade. At verse 26 the description of her ruin begins. "The ship founders at sea. Nebuchadnezzar is the east wind that upsets her."

The Fall of Satan.

Chapter 28 deals chiefly with the prince of Tyre. He is, as another says, the typical prince of the world in that day, and many of the expressions referring to him are borrowed for the after predictions about the Antichrist, or man of sin yet to come. He was the personification of the pride and wealth of Tyre, and assumed the haughtiest station. Compare verse 2 with 2 Thessalonians 2:1-4. The greatest difficulty in this description presents itself in verses 11-19, to whose remarkable language your attention is especially called. The question is, Is the same personage here referred to, or a different one? It is not so much for the purpose of forcing any particular interpretation on the class, as of impressing the chapter upon the mind for future study, that I call attention to a view with which I find myself somewhat in accord, viz: that the same person historically is in the mind of the writer, but that there is a deeper reference of the Holy Spirit to the fall of Satan. Note, for example, the change of the word "prince" to "king" (verse 12), and the summing up in that king of all creature beauty and wisdom. Also the expression of verse 13, "Thou wast in Eden the garden of God." The title ascribed to him of "the covering cherub," verse 14. Observe, too, that "there was no gradual slip or yielding to temptation from without," as in the case of man, but that he was perfect in his ways, etc., till iniquity was found in him (15). "Can it be doubted," asks a learned expositor, "that in this denunciation God had before Him the fall and ruin of His arch-enemy?"

The Doom of Egypt.

With the exception of Babylon perhaps, more space is given to the judgments upon Egypt than any other heathen nation. In the present instance four whole chapters are devoted to the subject. To what is Pharaoh likened, and in what language is his pride and self-conceit depicted (29: 3)? What figure of speech shows that the blow about to fall on Egypt would affect also all the smaller nationalities related to and dependent upon her (4, 5)? What particular change is laid at her door (6, 7)? Compare Isaiah 30:1-7; 31:1-3, and Jeremiah 27:5. What river is doubtless meant in verses 8-9? For how long would Egypt be thus waste and desolate, and her people as scattered exiles (10-12)? What would be the character of her kingdom thereafter (13-15)? Is this prophecy fulfilled? Who was to be God's executioner in this case (17-20)? Which brought the richer booty to the conqueror, Tyre or Egypt? What warning and comparison is set before Pharaoh, chapter 31? As Egypt had not profited morally by the example of fallen Assyria, but rather followed in her steps, therefore she, too, must meet the same end (verse 18). Note the solemn dirge in chapter 32, unveiling the unseen world, "The most solemn elegy over a heathen people ever composed."

The next lesson will be the conclusion of the book of Ezekiel. Special attention is asked to chapters 33-39. One reading will be sufficient for the chapters following.

REVIEW of the last lesson:

1. With what other prophet was Ezekiel contemporaneous?

2. What is the meaning of his name, and how does it represent the character of his mission?

3. How does his character compare with that of Jeremiah?

4. What can you recall of his personal history?

5. What are the four natural divisions of the book as to chapters?

6. Of what do the first two consist?

7. What four symbolic visions are associated with the call of Ezekiel?

8. What do you remember about the man with the ink-horn?

9. What two Gentile nations are represented by the eagles in the riddle of the eagles and the vine?

10. What sad symbolic circumstance occurs in the domestic life of the prophet?

11. During what period was Ezekiel dumb so far as Israel was concerned?

12. What great personality is supposed to be referred to under the figure of the king of Tyre?

13. Can you name any reasons for such a supposition?

14. What heathen nation receives the largest share of attention in this book so far as her judgments are concerned?

About Commentaries.

I have no doubt some of the class would like to know what commentaries on the prophets I would recommend? It is a hard thing to do. Indeed, I know of no commentaries whatsoever that are entirely satisfactory. There are many, of course, of the highest value for their textual criticism and moral and spiritual reflections. But so many of these great scholars seem blinded to any distinction between the earthly kingdom of Israel, and the Heavenly glory of Christ and the church. I would not be a hobbyist, or have any member of this class become so, but it would seem as if even ordinary intelligence and common fairness should separate these two things. There have been no references to the Christian church as such in the prophets thus far studied, and any allusions or applications of that nature must be read into the text. The church is a great mystery, unique, not spoken of in the Old Testament, founded on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2), whose origin, history and destiny are revealed to us in the New Testament only. To apply predictions intended for Israel as a nation, to the church as the mystical body of Christ is to do violence to the Scripture, and injustice to Bible learners. Truths historically applicable to Israel may be applied in an accommodated or figurative sense to Christians and the church, but that is a far different thing from ignoring Israel altogether as some practically do. It is this fact that has worked such confusion in the minds of many Christians, causing them to think the study of the Bible a hopeless undertaking, and feeding their speculations with all sorts of heretical opinions. The Bible is very clear and consistent throughout, especially the prophetic portions of the Old Testament; and for the time being, in order to fully appreciate that circumstance, I would like the class to forget that there is a New Testament to be studied, or a Christian church to be considered. The truth specifically intended for this dispensation will be dealt with when it is reached, but in the meantime let us not worry over an attempt to make two things one which were never intended to be one.

Personally, in the study of Ezekiel, I have enjoyed and been helped by the views of many writers; but I have held in my hand only one book whose author has insisted on the distinction referred to, and carried it clear through; and this would hardly be dignified by the title of a commentary. It is called "Notes on Ezekiel," by William Kelly, published by George Morrish, London, but to be obtained, I think, of Louiseaux Brothers, Fourth Avenue, N. Y. Its cost can not be over one dollar, I should say. The author presumes on a somewhat extended acquaintance with the Scriptures on the part of his readers, but one who has carefully taken this synthetic course of instruction thus far should find profit and enjoyment in his book. He has written as well on Isaiah and the Minor Prophets, although those volumes I have not seen.

The New Lesson

We now reach part third of our book in which, after his long silence during the siege of Jerusalem, the prophet opens his lips once more concerning Israel,, chapters 33-39. Following an outline suggested by Kelly, he first recurs to the individual ground on which God would henceforth deal with His people (33); then denounces the guilty shepherds who had been instrumental in bringing them into their present condition, a denunciation which easily leads to a prophecy and description of the Good Shepherd by whom in the future they would be fed and comforted (34); following this, after an interval in which he speaks of the hatred of and judgment on Mount Seir (35), he pledges first, the moral (36), and then the corporate or national restoration of the people (37). Very appropriately, this is succeeded by an account of the overthrow of what may be regarded as their last polictical enemy, Gog, which as we shall see is capable of identification with Russia (38-39).

The Opened Mouth.

After the siege of the city is over, and the walls broken down, one of the escaped

Israelites reaches Ezekiel at Chebar with the news, and at the same time he begins again to prophesy. See 33:21, 22. Now follows the reproof of the false shepherds in the next chapter. How is their wickedness classified (2-6)? What warning do they receive (7-10)? What promise is given for the sheep (11-16)? Note here, as in previous instances, the identification of the blessing with their return to the land (13). What indicates that this is to take place in connection with the coming of the Messiah (23-24)? How does verse 26 indicate that the blessing on Israel will result in blessing on other nations? To what age does this point? Can you recall parallel teaching in the other prophets?

Moral Restoration.

Passing over the judgment on Mount Seir, consider for a moment the revelations in chapter 36. How are these revelations introduced (1, 2)? How is Israel comforted (7-11)? What expression in verse 11 applies to the land? What shows, however, that a time subsequent to their Babylonian return must be in mind (25-31)? Have verses 26, 27, 28, 31 been fulfilled in the history of Israel as yet? On what ground does God thus promise to bless them (21, 32)? How do you understand verse 37?

Corporate Restoration.

The relation between chapters 36 and 37 furnishes another illustration of the unity or agreement of the prophets, for, as we have seen, all consent in saying that a moral restoration must precede the corporate restoration. This is not to say that Israel may not have returned to the land and a constituted government of some sort before her conversion to Jesus as the Messiah, but her real restoration in the Biblical sense of that term, and God's acknowledgment of her as His nation will take place doubtless only after the experiences of chapter 36 have become hers, and Christ has been received as her King. Let us now consider the figurative representation of this truth. Where is the prophet now carried in the spirit, and what does he behold (37:1, 2)? What did these dry bones represent (2)? Judging by the context, as well as your previous study, how should verse 12 be interpreted? Does it apply merely to individuals or to the nation as a nation? Is it the physically dead who are referred to, or the politically or nationally dead? What shows that this will be a restoration of the whole of Israel (the 12 tribes), and not of a part only (15-22)? Who shall reign over them (24-25)? This last prophecy is usually applied to Christ, although I confess a literal application would assume the resurrection of David from the dead for this purpose; and there are literalists who would so maintain; but I believe the evidence points to Christ.

The Future of Russia.

The words at the head of this paragraph have a startling, not to say sensational appearance, but in the judgment of some expositors are fully justified by the contents of chapters 38-39. The nation is referred to in verses 1-4. The Revised Version translates verse 2 thus: "Set thy face toward Gog, of the land of Magog, Rosh, Meschech and Tubal." "Rosh" is practically the first syllable of Russia, and in the Latin version is translated Russ. Meschech and Tubal are identified with Moscow and Tobolsk, the great capital cities of Russia. As a matter of fact also, the name "Gog" is substantially the first syllable of the word "Caucuses," which gives the name to the great range of mountains separating Russia from Europe. This word was originally pronounced Gogases.

The application of the prophecy to Russia is thought to be strengthened by the military combination referred to in verses 4-7, nothing like which has yet been known to history. "Gomer appears to be the head of the Cimmerian or Celtic race, as Togarmah of the Armenians." Ethiopia and Libya are in the Revised Version given as Cush and Phut. On the whole, it would seem to be a union of Persia, Asiatic and African nations with Russia at their head, or as "a guard unto them," (7).

The time and place harmonize with this idea, verse 8. "After many days," and "in the latter years" are expressions which we have come to identify with the close of this age and the opening of the next. "The land brought back from the sword," "gathered out of many peoples upon the mountains of Israel," etc., points to Palestine at a time when the ancient people of God are once more in possession. What does the word "safely" indicate as to their national condition at this time? What will be the motive actuating this foe (10-12)? What will be the result of the conflict (18-23)? The extent of the judgment upon the foe (39:1-5)? What further details are given as a witness of the terrible destruction (8-10, 11-16, 17-20)? See Revised Version. What two-fold object is in the mind of God concerning this judgement (21, 22)? What further corroborates the previous statement as to the time when this event shall take place (25-29)?

As we have proceeded in the study of the prophets we have seen the picture of the culminating events of the latter days of the age gradually filling out in outline. Each has added something to the whole. But these additions have not always represented a chronological order. For example, the study of Daniel, next in line, will contribute a feature in the history of the Gentile nations as related to the Jews which antedates this in Ezekiel. It is not until all the prophets have been studied, and the results finally grouped together,

and "sorted out" and arranged that we can obtain a comprehensive idea of that period.

The New Temple, 20-48.

The contents of this last part of Ezekiel are not only the most mysterious and difficult in this particular book, but, as some would say, in all the prophets. The prophet is brought very evidently to the vicinity of Jerusalem again (40:2), and he is shown a city and a temple in it; the gates and chambers of the latter, and its inner and outer courts; its tables and altars, and its adornments and decorations. Reference is made to the priests, and levites, and singers; to the keeping of the Sabbaths; and to the distribution and arrangement of the tribes. A prince is spoken of; the throne of the Lord is mentioned; His glory is seen entering and abiding therein; waters flow forth from the threshold of the temple, bringing life, to the dead earth and sea; and the name of the city is given as "Jehovah—Shammah," The Lord is there!

What does it all mean? Strictly speaking, it is not within the province of these lessons to attempt to say, even if one really knew. We are seeking simply to get hold of the main facts of the different books, leaving questions of explanation and interpretation for future consideration. As an aid, however, to the retention of this fact, I will mention a few of the opinions that have been advanced. These are conveniently grouped in an excursus on the subject in Lange's commentary if one can get hold of it, and also in Kelly's "Notes."

Some consider that the vision applies in a figurative sense to the Christian church; but none of these, as far as I am aware, have ever explained its figures or symbols in any satisfactory way even to themselves. A second class of expositors find its fulfillment in the return from the Babylonian captivity. But the temple of that time did not correspond with this, nor the priests, nor the prince, nor the sacrifices, nor the return of the glory, nor the healing waters. Indeed as Kelly says, there is more contrast than analogy between the two. A third class would hold that the vision describes what was remembered of Solomon's temple. But this was unnecessary for those who possessed the books of Kings and Chronicles. Moreover it does not describe Solomon's temple any more than Zerubbabel's. A fourth view is that it is "a Divine disclosure of a new condition when Israel shall be restored finally and forever." This last has the merit of an apparent consistency with all the prophecies that have gone before, but it is open to a serious objection drawn from the fact that there are sacrifices and human priests referred to. This, of course, is contrary to the Christian scheme, but we must remember that Christianity is not meant, but a new dispensation altogether, the millenial, dealing with Israel still in the flesh, on the earth. The church will be with Christ in the air (1 Thessalonians 4:13-18), and changes of immense import and magnitude will have taken place here. This last view is the most satisfactory to me notwithstanding all its difficulties, but circumstances forbid further reference to it just now. As we proceed in our studies more light may be thrown upon it.

The Word Outline.

Under the head of the Word Outline of the book, I would begin first with the prophet himself and classify under that division all you have discovered about him personally, like this:—

1. The prophet.
    a. Name. (Meaning.)
    b. Location.
    c. History.
    d. Period.
    e. Character.

Then I would do the same with the book, dividing it into its four parts with a few catchwords associated with each to recall the principal facts. One of the first paragraphs in the last lesson will be of assistance here. The next lesson will be Daniel, chapters 1-7.

REVIEW of the last lesson:

1. What great distinction should be kept in mind in studying the prophets?

2. Give an outline of the third division of the book.

3. What is the figurative illustration of the corporate restoration of the nation?

4. What reasons can you give for the application of the prophecy in chapters 38-39 to Russia?

5. What vision does the prophet behold in chapters 40-48?

6. What four views were mentioned concerning its application?

The New Lesson.

Daniel was a captive in Babylon some little time before Ezekiel was brought thither. Compare Daniel 1 with Ezekiel 1. His mission as a prophet differs materially from any of the others. They deal chiefly with Israel or Judah as the case may be, treating of the Gentile nations only incidentally, so to speak, and when they may be said to come in contact with the chosen people. But Daniel reverses this order. He deals more at length with the Gentile nations, and as it were, only incidentally with the Jews. He gives us in outline, the whole history of what might be called Gentile dominion from its origin at the time God gave it into the hands of Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, till the time it passes away with the restoration of Israel at the end of the present age and the coming of Christ to introduce the millenium. The whole of this period is that commonly known as "The Times of the Gentiles," and its governmental control will be found to be comprehended within four world-empires, the Babylonian, Medo-Persian, Greek and Roman.

Nebuchadnezzar's Dream, 2.

We may confidently omit the consideration of chapter 1, which presents nothing of difficulty, giving the account merely of the captivity and early training of the prophet at the court of Babylon. The prophetic portion of the book begins really with the interpretation of the king's dream, 2:36. We have seen in the earlier prophets intimations of the fact that God had committed the dominion of the world into the hands of the king of Babylon, but in Daniel 2:36-38, it is plainly stated. Just why God did this is not revealed in so many words, but an inductive study of the Scriptures shows that it was, in part, a judgment on Israel to which nation the dominion belonged according to the original promise, but which had forfeited it through unbelief and sin. Paradoxical as it may seem, it was too a judgment on the Gentiles. It was, so to speak, allowing them to have their own way in the earth in order to demonstrate their equal and utter unfitness to possess it. Both these lines of providence were intended to converge at a certain point; they were intended to convince men of their own inability and unworthiness to govern, and in so far quicken within them a desire and prepare them for the manifested kingdom of God on earth. I do not say that any other thought is excluded. For example, the culmination of the world's wickedness at the end of the age, making absolutely necessary the direct interference of God Himself to deliver it, will be a demonstration for all time of His justice, and holiness, as well as goodness and love in punishing no less than blessing. His name will at last be glorified in the sight of all men.

A question arises as to the literal meaning of verse 38. Did Nebuchadnezzar or the kingdom of Babylon absolutely control the whole world? I presume this is true as far as their energy and ambition prompted them to go. Their power and authority were limited doubtless only by conditions that may be said to have been self-imposed. But what about that

Inferior Kingdom.

which was to arise after them? We know from other parts of the book, corroborated by profane history, that it was that of the Medes and Persians. But in what sense inferior? Certainly not in military power, for it overcame Babylon; nor in geographical extent, for it embraced more territory; but in the character of its government, which was a limited rather than absolute monarchy as in the case of the "head of gold." The third kingdom of brass, still more inferior in the same sense, as symbolized by the baser metal, was that of Greece, while the fourth kingdom (verses 40-43) was the Roman. Let us look more carefully at the latter. It was symbolized by the iron portion of the image, still more inferior as to governmental character, and yet evidently of greater strength. It included the two legs of the image, representing the two halves of the empire, European and Asiatic, Western and Eastern, Rome and Constantinople. The ten toes representing as many lesser kingdoms into which the empire should subsequently be divided. The mixture of the iron and the clay representing, the one the strength of the monarchical. and the other the weakness of the democratic forms of government which, in a way, should be combined in these ten kingdoms. The application of verses 44, 45, is very plainly to

Kingdom of Christ.

which should be set up in the days of the ten kingdoms. The question is, however, Does it apply to the first or second advent of Christ? There are advocates of both views. Those who hold that it applies to the first advent identify the church with the kingdom. They say these two are practically one and the same; and the spread of the Gospel in

the earth and the development of the church is the setting up of the kingdom of Christ, and virtually the overcoming of the world-power, represented by the metal image. The others say "No." They maintain that the Roman empire is not yet divided into the ten distinct kingdoms, five on each foot, or half in the West and half in the East; and until that time the kingdom of Christ which they regard as separate and different from the church, can not be set up. Moreover, the language indicates, say they, that when the stone strikes the image there will be a violent concussion, and almost instantaneous pulverizing of its materials. In other words, the kingdom of Christ will be set up in connection with judgment on the living nations, and devastations which will immediately put an end to them as nations, and leave the Son of God in manifested and absolute control. It is not for me to seek to warp the minds of the members of this class with any arguments; but let each one determine for himself in the light of our preceding studies, which of the two views seems most in harmony with the teachings of the prophets as a whole.

Commentaries.

I imagine the average commentator will hold to the first of these views, so that if you get hold of any one of them you will not be far out of the way in the exposition of this prophecy from that point of view. But if I were asked for books on the other side of the question I would mention as the first and best, "Tregelles on Daniel." A new edition of this truly great book has recently been published, and can be obtained in this country by addressing "Watchword and Truth," Tremont Temple, Boston. Next to this I would mention a recent book, "The Great Prophecies of Daniel," by Nathaniel W. West, D. D., to be obtained of the publishers of "Our Hope," 80 Second St., New York. Neither of these books are expensive, but are of much value in the understanding of Daniel. Among the older books, I would name Barnes' Commentary on Daniel as quite good. This is easily obtainable for a small sum at the second-hand book stores of any large city. These writers may differ among themselves on minor points of interpretation, but it is a good thing for us to look at such a subject from various directions.

The effect on the King, 3-4

To return to the text. In the first place, how did this interpretation of his dream affect the king towards Daniel (2:46-49)? Secondly, what effect did it produce on the king himself? Did it humble him or inflate his pride? What illustration of its effect is recorded in chapter 3:1-6? What further evidence of the greatness of Daniel's God was afforded the king in connection with this transaction (3:24-30)? What further experience of a personal nature was the king obliged to pass through before he was sufficiently humbled (4:28-37)? Who is the narrator of the circumstances recorded in this chapter? What great principle of the Divine government or jurisprudence is set forth in verse 37?

Who was the successor of Nebuchadnezzar (chapter 5)? What indicates that Daniel must have gone into retirement for a while (10-16)? What change of power is indicated at the close of this chapter? According to the dream of Nebuchadnezzar what part of the image now comes into prominence? What change in the plan of government is made by the head of the Medo-Persian kingdom (chapter 6)? Who again comes into prominence and a position of great authority? How does Jehovah magnify Himself before the eyes of this kingdom in connection with the history of Daniel (25-28)?

The Four Beats, 7.

Who had this dream or vision, the king or the prophet? What sea do you think is meant in verse 2? The Mediterranean, let it be remembered is the geographical center of these prophecies. What is it that the prophet now beholds? We have here a good opportunity to again apply the law of recurrence, for in this second vision the Holy Spirit is recurring to the subject of the first. He is going over the very same ground, for the purpose, however, of bringing out certain features of the future history of the kingdoms not mentioned before. For example, the first beast, the lion, is identical with the head of gold of the image, and symbolizes the Babylonian kingdom. The second, the bear, is the same as the breast and arms of the image, and symbolizes the Medo-Persian empire. The leopard is the same as the brass portion of the image, symbolizing Greece. Observe especially in this case the four wings and four heads, a figure to which we shall have need to refer again. The fourth beast, nameless and terrible, is the same as the iron part of the image, symbolizing Rome, i. e., the Roman empire. The ten horns correspond to

The Ten Toes

of the image, symbolizing the ten kingdoms into which this last phase of the world-power is to be divided. But now comes the new feature not mentioned previously, viz: "The little horn, before whom there were three of the first horns plucked up by the roots." Verse 8. His original weakness and insignificance is seen in the allusion to him as "little." His amazing development of strength in the fact that he up-roots three of the other horns. His intelligence is indicated by what figures? His blasphemous spirit is shown in what manner?

Read verse 9 in the Revised Version, and you will discover that it represents

not the "casting down" of the thrones, but the "placing" of them in position for judgment. The whole scene in verses 9, 10 is Heavenly, while that again in verses 11-14 is on the earth. The two events are, in a sense, transpiring simultaneously; i. e., while those above are getting ready to judge, these others on the earth are ripening for the judgment.

The Antichrist.

I believe most expositors are agreed that the "little horn" is a type of that malignant and God-defying being known currently as the Antichrist. We shall learn more about him in the later chapters of Daniel, and he comes to the fore again especially in 2 Thessalonians and Revelation. Observe from verse 11 that he has now developed from the little horn to the big horn,—the chief king among the ten. This is shown in the fact that it is because of him, i. e., his "great" or blasphemous words, that the "beast" or world-empire it represents is at last destroyed.

But some one may ask, What about verse 12? Does not the "beast" destroyed in verse 11 represent the world-power as synonymous with the Roman Empire? Yes. Then if the "beast" or Roman Empire is destroyed, put out of existence as a world-power, does not its destruction carry with it, in fact include, that of all the three preceding world-powers of which it was the last successor? Yes. But what does this mean (verse 12): "As concerning the rest of the beasts (world-empires), they had their dominion taken away, yet their lives were prolonged for a season and time?" Dr. Tregelles' answer is as follows: "Verse 12 must be regarded, I think, as a kind of parenthetic statement of the manner in which the dominion of the three former beasts had passed away—not by any destroying judgments from God, but by each being superceded by its successor. But here there is the direct judgment of God upon the fourth beast, because of the matured evil of its last horn."

Verses 13, 14, present no particular difficulty as we see in them the picture we have come to recognize, and I trust, rejoice in, viz: that of the Son of man, our blessed Savior, coming before the Father to be invested with His earthly kingdom in manifested glory. Read verse 13 in the Revised Version and compare it with such New Testament passages as Matthew 16:27, 25:31, Philippians 3:20, 21, Titus 2:11-13.

What was the effect of this vision on the prophet himself (15)? From whom did he receive its interpretation (16)? In which feature was he the most interested (19)? What proves the blasphemous character of the little horn (25)? Against what class of persons on earth was his hate directed (25)? For how long a period shall he be permitted to pursue his God-defying course (25)? According to Tregelles, and the school of prophecy he represents, "Time" means one year, "Times," two years, and the "dividing of time," half a year. "Thus then the period at which the especial blasphemy and persecutions of this horn begin, is

Three Years and a Half

before the coming of the Lord Jesus—a short time, during which evil will be allowed greatly to prevail, but then in consequence of its full development the judgment of God will come."

In the next lesson, which will be the conclusion of Daniel, additional particulars will be contributed to this picture of the coming day, but we may bring this lesson to a close by the following quotation from Tregelles, pp. 46, 47: "This then is briefly the history as given in this vision: The Roman earth is found divided into ten kingdoms; another king arises who destroys three of the former kings; for three years and a half he acts in open defiance of God, and in persecution of His saints; the whole Roman earth is so connected with his deeds as to share in the judgment which comes from the hand of God upon him; and this occurs at the very time when the kingdom is given into the hand of the Son of man, and when the saints take it with Him."

REVIEW of the last lesson:

1. Who was the earlier captive, Daniel or Ezekiel?

2. How does Daniel's mission differ from the other prophets?

3. What period is covered by "The Times of the Gentiles?"

4. How would you explain the transfer of dominion to the Gentiles?

5. Name the four world-empires.

6. Give the two views of the application of 2:44, 45.

7. What illustration of the law of recurrence can you name?

8. What is the most important additional feature in the second vision?

9. Who is the "little horn" thought to typify?

The New Lesson.

Much was said in the previous lesson about the Roman empire, the Roman world, the Roman earth, etc., and for the benefit of some it is here explained that those phrases refer in general terms to that part of the globe whose territory or rule borders on the Meditteranean sea. For example, without meaning to be exact, it includes in the west, England, France, Spain, Italy and part of Austria, and in the east Greece, part of Turkey, Egypt, and part of Africa, with certain lesser countries bordering upon them. The reasons determining this point, and justifying the allusion to the Roman Empire as essentially still existent and certain so to continue until the establishment upon its ruins of the kingdom of Christ, will be found in most, if not all the commentaries on Daniel, and in the case of Tregelles' heretofore mentioned, pages 57-80.

The Ram and the He-Goat, 8.

In this chapter we have another illustration of the law of recurrence. With the exception that the prophet is here speaking of but two of the world-empires —Medo-Persian and Greek, instead of four, he is going over precisely the same ground as before and adding certain particulars then overlooked. How long after his previous vision did this occur? In what locality was he now resident? At what place did he seem to be in the vision? Describe the first beast he saw. What feature of it suggests the two arms of the metal image? What empire was typified thereby? What does that suggest as to the typical significance of the ram? Judging by the course of this beast, in what direction did it originate? How does this bear upon its typical character? Describe the second beast. What experience in verse 5 indicates the velocity and force of his speed? What was the most remarkable feature of his appearance? On the supposition that the ram now overcome represented the Medo-Persian empire, which of the world-powers was represented by the he-goat? Does the sacred text justify this conclusion? Read verses 20, 21. Whom does profane history name as the first great king of Greece? Did Alexander the Great have offspring, or was his dominion at his death divided among his four generals? How is this fact foreshadowed in verses 8 and 22? In Daniel's first vision which beast represented Greece? What features of the leopard suggested the division of the empire into four?

Antiochus' Epiphanes.

To abandon the interrogatory method for a moment, let us refresh our minds with the history of the Grecian period. After Alexander's death his dominion was divided among his four generals according to the four points of the compass. One of these divisions included Syria, and in the course of time a very wicked king came into power there known as Antiochus Epiphanes. During his career, i. e., about 170 B. C., he invaded the Holy Land and desecrated the temple at Jerusalem. His whole history, especially in his relations to the Jews, marks him as one of the most conspicuous types of the Antichrist, and it is with reference to him, as the events show, that the vision now proceeds. So minutely is his character and history portrayed in this and a subsequent chapter, that some have contended that this portion of the book of Daniel must have been written after the event! There need be no doubt, however, in any unprejudiced mind that we are here dealing with prophecy and not history, although in process of time the former was transmuted into the latter, proving unmistakably the genuineness and Divine origin of this book.

To return to the sacred text. It is in verse 9 that the earliest prophetic reference is supposed to be made to Antiochus Epiphanes, who is prefigured by the "little horn" coming out of one of the four notable ones. As "he waxed great towards the south and east," we have an intimation of the direction whence he came, Syria in the north and west. "The pleasant land" identified itself as the Holy Land. "The host of heaven," verse 10, is taken by some to apply to Israel in her peculiar relation to God. Verse 11 predicts this ruler's sacrilegious treatment of the Jewish temple. Verse 12, especially as rendered by the Revised Version, shows further that this pollution was Divinely permitted in the nature of judgment on Israel for transgression.

Who interpreted this vision of Daniel? To what period of time did Gabriel say this vision belonged (17, 19)? It is at this point we meet with another illustration of the

Law of Double Reference

already defined. Antiochus Epiphanes begins to fade from view, and a greater despot than he to be pictured to our eyes, even the Antichrist of whom, as it has been said, he is so remarkable a type. The

peculiarity of the language in this chapter suggests one of those dissolving pictures which almost every one has seen: As you approach it from this side it looks like a representation say, of George Washington, but as you come in front of it you perceive the features to be undergoing a change, and when you quite reach the opposite side, behold! you are gazing on the lineaments of Abraham Lincoln! So it is here. It is Antiochus Epiphanes, and none other who first arrests attention, but as we proceed from verse to verse his outline gradually merges into that of another. The first thing that makes us conscious of a change is these expressions in verses 17 and 19 as to the time when this vision will be fulfilled. The "end" is spoken of three times, and I can not but agree with those who hold that this means the end of this dispensation, i. e., the time when God's indignation against Israel shall reach its completion. Everything henceforth said concerning this person and his actings therefore must belong to this period, viz: "the last end of the indignation."

See how this thought seems to be corroborated in what follows. Observe these expressions in verses 23 and 25:—"The latter time of their kingdom," "when the transgressors are come to the full," "he shall also stand up against the Prince of princes," and "he shall be broken without hand." He is thus found not merely the opposer of God's people Israel, but even the opposer of the Lord Himself. The title "Prince of princes" seems to refer to Christ, and the whole context thus points to the time of His second coming to deliver Israel, judge the living nations, and set up His kingdom. See 2 Thessalonians 2:3-8.

Two "Little Horns," or One!

This "little horn" of chapter 8 suggests at once that of chapter 7, and we ask, Are they the same? They certainly have the same moral features. Moreover both act during the same period of time and up until Christ takes the kingdom. And finally, both are found within the same territorial limits. "The four divided kingdoms which formed themselves out of the empire of Alexander were one by one incorporated with the Roman empire. But as it is out of one of these kingdoms that the 'little horn' of this chapter springs, it is clear that he belongs to the Roman earth." We may therefore conclude that these two "little horns" really typify one and the same person.

But now a strange thing occurs. We find that the description of this "little horn" coincides remarkably with that of a certain

King of the North

mentioned in the eleventh chapter of this book. Let us, therefore, pass over the consideration of chapter 9 for the present, and begin that of chapter 11. Indeed we might say chapter 10, which is really introductory to the following one.

When did Daniel receive this revelation (10:1)? What language in the same verse indicates the period of its fulfillment? What preparation had Daniel passed through previous to this revelation (2,3)? At what locality was the revelation received (4)? What is the effect of the angelic appearance on Daniel (5-9)? What remarkable commendation does Daniel receive (10-12)? On what mission had the angel come (14)? What was the effect of this announcement on the prophet (15-17)? How was he recovered (18, 19)? What mysterious utterances are contained in verses 13, 20, 21? The commentaries will tell you that these allusions to "the Prince of the Kingdom of Persia," and "Michael one of the chief princes," "and the Princes of Grecia," have no reference to human beings, but to spiritual intelligences, both

Good and Evil Angels,

bringing to mind, and throwing some light upon such New Testament passages as Ephesians 1:20-22, 3:10, 6:11, 12, etc. We now come directly to the angel's message in chapter 11, where it will be found that the first four verses cover the ground already traversed from a certain period in the history of the kingdom of Persia then existent, to the time when the kingdom of Greece is divided into the four parts. It was at this point in the previous vision (chapter 8) that the little horn appeared, whose history was given down until the time he stood against the Prince of princes and was destroyed. It might seem from that vision that he sprung up immediately after the division of Alexander's kingdom into four. But the present chapter "recurs" to the subject to prevent this supposition, and give some account of the intervening history and the events leading up to his development.

The Story

in the eleventh chapter might be given like this: It seems that after the division of Alexander's kingdom there were two kingdoms out of the four that come into special prominence in the field of prophecy because of their proximinty to the Holy Land and the people of Israel. These were Egypt on the south and Syria on the north, the history of whose dynasties or kings is now given. These kings of the south and north are represented in a chronic state of conflict one with the other, in which the latter finally proves the victor. The vision then proceeds with the history of the king, or kings, of the north until one appears of special vileness apparently identical with Antiochus Epiphanes of the earlier vision, whose portrait once more blends with that of the Antichrist of whom he is the type. Let us now study the chapter with more particularity, commencing at the point where Alexander's kingdom has been divided and the story of these two divisions

of it begins (verse 5). With which of the kings does the story commence? What phrase in verse 6 indicates the remoteness at which this prophecy was to be fulfilled? What sort of alliance is sought to be made between these two kings? Is it successfully carried out? As the result apparently of these fruitless efforts war ensues between the two kingdoms. Which of the two is for the time being successful (7-9)? Now, however, the sons of the king of the north are stirred up and the tables are turned (10-13). What forecasts a combination of nations against the king of the south (14)? What is there in this same verse to indicate possibly, an attempt on the part of some to set the Jews again in their own land independently of God's plans? Read the latter half of the verse in the Revised Version. Is this attempt to be successful? What probably will prevent its success? Verses 15, 16, may indicate that the king of the north at this time will prevent it. He increases in strength, comes into the "glorious land" himself, and apparently makes it the scene of his military operations. In what direction does he now turn these operations (18)? Are those operations successful or not? How closes the history of this particular king of the north (19)?

It is at this point (verse 21) that in the judgment of some the features of the Anti-christ begin again to appear, whose description and history continue to the close of the chapter. They base their judgment, to a certain extent, on that phrase in verse 6, "In the end of the years." All the events following that verse, say they, take place rapidly one after another until the Antichrist comes on the scene. Others believe not, and hold that at verse 21, we have the forecast of Antiochus Epiphanes only, and that the Antichrist does not come into view until verse 36. The latter has been my own opinion, although the question for our present purpose is not of vital importance. I am doing what I can in this limited way to aid the class to see a little light on the great prophecies in this book, but can not expect to accomplish results entirely satisfactory. After this synthetic course is concluded you will doubtless have a desire to study particular books more in detail, and Daniel will be one of them. The commentaries and aids heretofore mentioned will put you in the way of its more complete mastery.

Let us, however, examine our chapter a little further. After the death of the last king of the north what kind of a succeessor appears (20)? Is his reign short or long? How is the next king described (21)? How does he obtain the kingdom? This king, as has been said, is thought by some to be the Antichrist, by others Antiochus Epiphanes down to verse 36, where he blends with the Antichrist. Perhaps it will be easier for us, and establish a better "working hypothesis" as scientists would call it, to assume the first idea to be correct and gather the facts around it. But before doing so let me anticipate a little. From our previous studies we have been persuaded of the likelihood that Israel is to return to her land in the latter days. But a comparison of passages bearing on that topic would lead to the further thought that at her return she will still be in an unconverted state. At this time, as we shall see later, she enters into a covenant with Antichrist for a certain period of time. This covenant is broken by him in the middle of that period. Then Jacob's

"Time of Trouble"

begins as never before. Then the Messiah appears on Jacob's behalf and Antichrist is destroyed. The Scriptural references to these conclusions will be touched upon as we come to them, but in the present chapter, and at the verses now to be considered, it is thought that the earliest reference to that covenant is made (22, 23). Dr. Tregelles believes that from this time on the Antichrist stands in connection with Israel, and all that is henceforth said of him is with regard to that people and land. This lesson would probably be too long were we to add an examination of the whole chapter, which we will reserve in connection with chapter 9, for the next lesson.

REVIEW of the last lesson:

1. What may be called the geographical center of the Roman world?

2. By what beasts are the second and third kingdoms typified in chapter 8?

3. What wicked king becomes a conspicuous type of Antichrist?

4. What were his nation and period?

5. What leads to the belief that Antichrist is referred to in this chapter?

6. What three reasons may be given for the identification of the two "little horns" as one?

7. What allusions to good and evil angels are found in chapter 10?

8. What two out of the four Grecian kingdoms are particularly referred to in chapter 11?

9. Which of these two kings finally becomes the type of, or blends into the Antichrist?

10. Name the five supposed events immediately preceding and culminating in the deliverance of Israel and destruction of Antichrist.

The New Lesson.

We have now reached that solemnly interesting period in our study of chapter 11 where, in the judgment of a certain school of prophecy, Antichrist is on his throne of power, and has made a covenant with Israel returned (in an unconverted state) to their old land. We have seen how he reached that place of power, not in the usual line of succession apparently, but by flatteries (21). This circumstance agrees moreover with the manner in which the little horn comes out of the four notable ones in chapter 8, and out of the ten in chapter 7. He is among, but not one of them.

Verses 23-31 of our chapter cover a new division of the subject, and give us prophetically the history of the period which elapses from his making the covenant with the people, till the time when he breaks it, taking away the daily sacrifice, and setting up the abomination of desolation in the holy place. What language in verse 23 suggests that he will use this covenant for his own aggrandisement? What in verse 24 suggests that his popularity will be enhanced by a show of liberality? What land does he now invade (25)? What suggests treachery on the part both of himself and the king of Egypt (27)? On his return from this successful invasion to his own kingdom in the north (Syria?) it is necessary, of course, for him to pass through the Holy Land. What suggests that he experiences a feeling of antagonism towards its people (28)? What puts an end to a second invasion of Egypt on his part (29, 30)? What shows increased antagonism towards Israel at this time (30)? What language in this verse indicates that

A Party of Apostates

has already arisen among the people of the Holy Land? It is not to be supposed that these who "forsake the holy covenant" turn aside from Christ whom as yet they have not accepted nationally, but from God as God. They no longer acknowledge or worship Him, and so are preparing the way for the acknowledgment and worship of one who assumes to stand in His place (2 Thessalonians 2: 3, 4). This step soon follows (31). Compare this verse with Matthew 24:15 and its context.

From verse 36 to the end of this chapter we have the Antichrist in all his unhindered course. He takes a place of blasphemy and assumes Divine honors (Tregelles). How do verses 38, 39 show that while before men he assumes the place of God, yet in his own innermost heart he is an idolater? What shall happen to him at

"The Time of the End" (40)?

What is there in this verse to show that while he has been occupying the throne of the king of the north, he has been a usurper of his power? What countries escape out of his hand in this his last campaign (41)? How does this agree with Isaiah 11:13, 14? Into whose hands are these countries to fall? Where shall Antichrist plant his tabernacle at the last (45)? What city rests on "the glorious holy mountain?" What shall happen to Antichrist at this place? Compare 2 Thessalonians 2:8, Zechariah 14:3, 4.

How does chapter 12:1 show that the deliverance of Israel shall take place at this time? Compare Zechariah 13:8, 9. Verse 2 of this same chapter speaks of a resurrection at this time. But I do not think it refers to what is generally known as the last resurrection of Revelation 20:11-14, for example; but to the first resurrection, i. e., the resurrection of believers only that will take place at Christ's second coming. 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18, Revelation 20:1-6. We can not go into this subject at the present time, but will duly consider it in its place.

The Seventy Weeks, Chapter IX.

We are now in a position to consider chapter 9. Hitherto we have been pursuing the history of the Gentile empires, but at this chapter we return again to the Jews. Daniel, studying the books of the earlier prophets, perceives that the time is near for the return of his countrymen to their own land at the close of the 70 years' captivity (1, 2). He begins to pray to God upon the subject (3-19), and the angel Gabriel is sent to give him the information desired (20-23). But he gives him much more than he was able even to ask or think. Not only is he informed concerning the immediate return of his countrymen, but the history of his nation is revealed to him down to the end of the age. In other words, the law of recurrence finds a new illustration in this case, and in the answer to Daniel's prayer, we

return over the same course already traversed in the previous visions, except that now we look upon the events not from the point of view of the Roman world, but that of Israel and the Holy City of Jerusalem. We begin our study at the allusion to the "seventy weeks," verse 24.

The word "weeks" is the translation of a Hebrew original meaning something divided into seven parts—a heptad, a hebdomad. It would not be improper to render the expression thus: "Seventy sevens are determined upon thy people," etc. It is not stated whether these sevens are the denomination of weeks, months or years, but the context leaves us no alternative but to call them years. Seventy sevens of years are equal to 490 years. In this period all those events are to come to pass noted in verse 24. It will be seen at a glance that these events include the closing up of this dispensation, the reconciliation of Israel to God, and the bringing in of millenial peace and righteousness. The point of view is practically the same as that dwelt on in Isaiah 40:1, 2.

This period of 490 years is again divided into

Three Parts.

The first part covers seven sevens or 49 years, the second, sixty-two sevens or 434 years (verse 25), and the third one seven or 7 years (verse 27). The first division of the sevens begins at the time of "the going forth of the command to build Jerusalem," and includes the setting up of the walls after the Babylonian captivity. Speaking loosely, it is the period covered by the times of Nehemiah. I should like to pause long enough to present the reasons for statements of this important character, but the exigency of the situation will not permit. It is hoped and believed that these synthetic studies will stimulate a goodly proportion of the class to further analytical research on their own account. The second division begins at the completion of the walls and establishment of Jerusalem in that sense, and continue down, to the first advent of Christ (Messiah, the Prince). At the end of this period, i. e., "after the three score and two weeks," an interval follows in which the "Messiah is cut off," (crucified), and Jerusalem and the temple are destroyed. This destruction takes place at the hands of "the people of the prince that shall come." Notice particularly in verse 26 that it is not said that "the prince that shall come" shall destroy the city, but the people of that prince. "The prince that shall come," as we shall see in a moment, is the Antichrist who is yet to come; but the people of that prince, as the earlier visions of Daniel have revealed, is none other than the Roman people. It was the Roman people who, in A. D. 70, destroyed "the city and the sanctuary." See Luke 21:20.

At this point the prophecy proceeds to consider the history of

The Prince That Shall Come.

and with his history begins the third and last division of the sevens. The second division ended with the first advent of Christ, and the third division begins when the Antichrist is on the throne of power, and has entered into covenant with the Jews at Jerusalem as set before us in chapter 11. All these intervening centuries are known among students of prophecy as "the church period," and are not reckoned in God's dealings with Israel. This statement will seem strange to any who hear of it for the first time. But I believe it capable of proof that the history of Israel can furnish other illustrations of the same principle. When Israel is not in her own land as at the present time, and on other earlier occasions, she is, as a nation, out of communion with God, and time with reference to her is considered lost. A due consideration and application of this principle would probably remove some of the chronological difficulties in the Bible.

For corroboration of the idea that the prophecy is here treating of the Antichrist read verse 26 in the Revised Version. The words "the end" in the King James is there rendered

His End,

showing plainly that it is a person who is spoken of. But the person to whom the pronoun refers can only be "the prince that shall come" just alluded to in the preceding clause. How is his end described? Compare Isaiah 10:22, 28:18. How is the interval up to "the end" characterized, as one of peace or war? Read again the Revised Version. For how long shall he covenant with the Jews? How many years are covered by the "one week," or "one seven?" When shall the covenant be broken by him apparently? What shall he now set up in the temple to be worshipped instead of Jehovah? The marginal reading throws light on this question which renders the phrase thus: "And upon the battlements (or pinnacle) shall be the idol of the desolator." Compare once more Matthew 24:15, and 2 Thessalonians 2:4. What now follows? Either the marginal reading or that in the Revised Version is to be preferred here: "And even unto the consummation and that determined, shall wrath be poured upon the desolator."

We thus conclude our study of Daniel, in some respects the most important and difficult, as it is the most interesting of all the prophets. I would that I had time to review it fully, and gather the threads of our meditation into a strong knot of conviction. But I have little doubt that a patient and prayerful examination of the book even with the very limited aid here afforded, will not be without compensatory results. Perhaps such a

The Word Outline.

as the following may be of value to assist the memory:

1. Daniel's captivity and training.
2. Nebuchadnezzar's dream.
3-4. Effects of the dream on the king.
5. Belshazzar's feast and loss of the kingdom.
6. Persian dominion and Darius' decree.
7. The vision of the four beasts.
8. The ram and the he-goat.
9. The seventy weeks.

The Minor Prophets.

11-12. The king of the north.

The books of the prophets number sixteen, and are divided into major and minor. The major prophets, so-called not from their greater importance necessarily, but greater size, are Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel and Daniel, all of which we have now studied. The twelve minor prophets may be classified as follows:

1. Those who prophesied in Israel.
2. Those who prophesied in Judah.
3. Those who had a message to a Gentile nation only.
4. Those who prophesied in Judah after the captivity.

To the first-named belong Amos, Hosea and Micah. The first two we have taken up in this course. The last was as truly a prophet to Judah as Israel; and being contemporary with Isaiah it is hardly necessary for us to give him consideration just now

To the second class belong Joel, Habbakuk and Zephaniah. These are all very small books, and since it was absolutely necessary to omit some from our course, it has been thought best to omit these rather than the larger books. Joel prophesied perhaps even earlier than Isaiah, and along the same general lines. Habbakuk and Zephaniah were contemporaries of Jeremiah, and in studying him we have practically gotten hold of their messages as well.

The third class includes Jonah, Nahum and Obadiah. The first two prophesied against Nineveh, the capital of Assyria, probably about the date of Isaiah. The last was commissioned to the Edomites. These nations have already been considered as extensively as present circumstances will allow.

The last division includes Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi. The first two were contemporaneous with Zerubbabel, their immediate mission being to incite the people to rebuild the temple after their return from Babylon, althought both refer as well to the far future and the end of the age. Malachi, who closes the Old and forms the connecting link with the New Testament canon, is thought to have lived and prophesied in the days of Nehemiah.

It is needful, or desirable at least, that we devote the rest of our time to the study of these post-captivity books, the longest and most important of which is Zechariah. We shall conclude our course in the prophets with two lessons from this book. That for next week will consist of chapters 1-8 inclusive.

REVIEW of the last lesson:

1. What two chapters in the New Testament bear a parallel relation to the closing chapters in Daniel?
2. With what people is the prophecy occupied in chapter 9?
3. Through what medium does Daniel receive this prophecy?
4. What is the meaning of the original of the word "Weeks" in chapter 9?
5. Name the three periods of time into which the seventy weeks are divided.
6. When, and why, in the prophetic sense, is time not considered with reference to Israel?
7. Give the Word Outline of Daniel.
8. Name the "major" prophets.
9. Classify the "minor" prophets.

The New Lesson.

Before commencing the study of Zechariah I would like the class to carefully read Ezra. Those who have gone through the course in the historical books will only need to review the lesson given on that book.

The seventy years captivity is at an end for Israel. The "head of gold" of Nebuchadnezzar's dream has been succeeded by the "breast and arms of silver," the "lion" of Daniel's vision by the "bear." Babylon, in other words, has been conquered by the Medes and Persians; Cyrus is on the throne; and in fulfillment of the prophecies of both Isaiah and Jeremiah he has issued his proclamation and given permission to the Jews to return to their own land.

For different reasons many have no inclination to return, and the first company that went up under Zerubbabel numbered not more than 50,000.

The chief task they set before themselves was the re-building of the temple, which was carried on, however, amid great difficulties. These difficulties included their fewness in numbers and limited facilities in comparison with the great undertaking; and especially the opposition of the Samaritans and other adjacent enemies, who had successfully arrayed against them to the authorities in Persia. Underneath these outward obstacles there was an inward weakness born of their own consciousness of sin in the past, and the feeling that their present afflictions were only a continuation of the just punishment thereof. They had something of a God-forsaken experience.

In their sorrow and depression, however, God had remembered them in mercy. He had sent His prophets to them, Haggai and Zechariah, whose mission was to cheer and encourage them in their efforts with the assurance of His presence and blessing. Zechariah, whose book is the longer of the two, had really a two-fold mission. He was sent not only to strengthen their hands in the time being, but to quicken their hope, as the earlier prophets had done, prior to and during the captivity, by painting in glowing colors the far-off time of perpetual blessing and triumph over every foe.

This two-fold mission of the prophet is set before us in a two-fold division of the book. Chapters 1-8 give us a series of prophetic visions bearing primarily, though not entirely, upon the prophet's own time, while chapters 9-14 deal chiefly with the events culminating at the end of the age and the opening of the millenium.

Part one, after the introduction, chapter 1:1-6, might be outlined thus:

1. The prophetic visions, 1-6.
   - a. The man among the myrtle trees.
   - b. The four horns.
   - c. The four smiths.
   - d. The measuring line.
   - e. The high-priest in the temple.
   - f. The golden candlestick.
   - g. The flying roll.
   - h. The woman in the ephah.
   - i. The four chariots.
2. The symbolic crowning of the high priest, 6.
3. The instruction about fasting, 7-8.

The Man Among the Myrtle Trees.

To understand this first vision is to get the key to all the rest. When was it received by the prophet? Chapter 1:7. Describe what he saw (8). Observe that two persons are referred to here, the man upon the red horse, and the angel that talked with Zechariah, sometimes called the "interpreting angel." The man on the horse seems afterward identified with "the angel of the Lord," verses 11, 12, which is one of the Old Testament names for Christ. It is presumable, of course, and indeed the context makes it necessary to suppose that the other horses had angelic riders also. Who are these described to be (10)? What report gave they of the earth (11)? Prosperity and peace, in other words, seems to have been characteristic of all the peoples of the earth, while Jerusalem, however, was distressed, the temple unfinished, and the remnant of the Jews there persecuted by enemies. Who now intercedes on behalf of Jerusalem and Judah (12)? Is the answer of Jehovah encouraging or the opposite (13)? What was His answer in detail (14-17)? Was the peace and prosperity of the Gentile nations an evidence necessarily of the Divine blessing upon them (15)? Jehovah had used them to chastise and discipline His people, but what shows their own selfish and wicked intent in the premises (same verse)? What does Jehovah promise shall be accomplished by the little remnant at this time (16)? What of the future (17)? I need not pause to point out how this was fulfilled in the history of God's people at the time, in a measure at least. The temple was built, the cities were restored, and Jerusalem and Judah were comforted. And yet I am quite in accord with those who believe that in accordance with

The Law of Double Reference

there is to be a complete and grander fulfillment in the days to come. The two following visions, if we shall call them two —the four horns and four smiths (Revised Version), are closely connected with the one just considered. The four horns are identified as the four world-powers (Babylonian, Persian, Greek and Roman) who are to scatter Israel, but the four smiths are four corresponding powers of some sort, not necessarily nations, which shall overcome them at the last and bring deliverance. We are almost necessarily shut up to the conclusion that this prophecy extends to the latter days by reason of its reference to the whole of the four powers. The next vision, that of the measuring line, presents no serious difficulty. Its significance explained (chapter 2:4, 5), is seen to be the same practically as that of the man among the myrtles. However it may have had an approximate fulfillment in the prophet's own time, verses 10-13 indicate that it looks toward the future. What declaration in tnose verses seem to prove that?

The High Priest and Satan, 3.

To understand and appreciate the meaning of the vision now reached, one should keep in mind that a cause of dejection on the part of the Jews at this time was their consciousness and conviction of past sin. They felt, as was previously stated, that God had forsaken them, and that their present sorrow and numerous calamities were the result of that fact. We see herein a parallel to the spiritual condition of many a true believer in our own day, whom Satan torments with the belief that he is not saved, and cannot be saved on account of his many and black sins. Indeed this very thing is now set before us in symbol, only that there is a nation in the case here, and not merely an individual, for Joshua the high priest represents the whole of Israel.

Where is the high priest seen to be (3:1)? It is thought by some that he was represented as in the holy place ministering at the altar. Who is seen to be with him, and for what malign purpose? We have here in symbol, the idea of Satan's temptation of the saint to doubt God's goodness and power to forgive and save. How is this goodness and power shown, however, in the next verse? On what ground is Jerusalem to be saved, on that of merit or of the Divine choice? What does verse 3 teach as to the truth of Satan's insinuation against Israel as represented by the high priest? Does the imagery indicate the holiness or sinfulness of the people? Yet how is Divine grace illustrated in the next recorded command of Jehovah (4)? What did the removal of his filthy garments signify? What did the changed raiment signify? Compare Romans 3:22. What next was done (5)? By this act the clothing of the high priest was completed and he was fitted for his official service, as before he was not. Who is represented as "standing by" all this time as if interceding for Joshua (and through him for the nation), and to see that these commands were carried out and these benefits conferred? With whom have we identified "the Angel of the Lord?" What charge is now laid upon Joshua, and what privilege is connected with it (7)? I quote here in part from a valuable commentary on Zechariah, published by A. C. Gaebelein, 80 Second St., New York. He applies the prophecy mainly to the last times, and says: "In analyzing this charge, we see clearly what Israel's earthly calling is and wherein her millenial glory and work will consist. (1) Judging in the house of the Lord, and from there ruling and judging the nations. (2) Keeping the Lord's courts. In the new millenial temple there will be ordinances, and that temple will be a house of prayer for all nations. (3) She will have places to walk among the ministering angels." In explanation of this last remark the author reminds us that Israel's cleansing will take place in that day not in Heaven, but on the earth. The church will be above occupying the many mansions, sitting with

Christ on the Throne.

the glorified Head over all. The angels will be ascending and descending upon Him in service both earthly and Heavenly (John 1:51), and among these Israel may have a place. Her place being that of ministry to the nations.

What language in verse 8 would seem to indicate that the restoration and blessing of Israel in that day will be regarded as miraculous? What language in the same verse connects it with the manifestation of the glory of Christ? What other prophet in particular speaks of Him by the name of the Branch? What would lead us to suppose that the following verse (9) also refers to Christ? Can you name any other passages in either Testament that speaks of Him under the figure of a Stone? The commentary above referred to, however, regards this verse as meaning "Israel restored, and as such, the nucleus of the kingdom of God and His Christ on this earth." This is so judged because of the closing words "I will remove the iniquity of that land in one day." This whole story of Joshua standing before the Angel of the Lord affords material for a precious Bible-reading or Gospel sermon. As I once heard Rev. W. J. Erdman put it, it gives us a picture of the sinner;—chosen, cleansed, clothed and crowned.

The Golden Candlestick, 4.

The Christian church is doubtless more familiar with the symbol of the golden candlestick than any other in this book, for which reason it will require but little consideration here. The candlestick was evidently a copy of that in the early ta-

bernacle, but with what difference (verse 2)? From what source was its oil supplied (3)? What did this supply of oil from the trees symbolize (6)? The candlestick itself may be said to represent the temple which the Jews were now essaying to build, or for that matter, the Jewish nation as a whole which was now sought to be re-established on its former basis and thus become a light in the world. The difficulties in the way of accomplishing these things seemed insuperable, and were so indeed if the strength of man only should be considered, but God would interpose, and His Spirit would do what human agencies could not do. How is this difficulty and its removal figuratively expressed (7)? How is the figure explained (8-10)? On what particular point did the prophet desire further light (12)? What reply was made to him (14)? By these "two anointed ones" is sometimes understood Zerrubbabel and Joshua, the leaders of Israel at this time on whom, and through whom in a sense, the Holy Spirit would be poured out for the successful termination of the work.

Of course it is quite proper to use this symbol in an accommodated sense as applying to the church of the present day in its testimony and work; in which case the "two anointed ones" may be taken to represent any who especially "filled with the Spirit" are executing the Lord's will in power. At the same time also it is to be steadily kept in mind that the whole thing applies primarily to Israel, not only in the time of Zechariah, but in the last times when through the blessing of the Spirit, as we have seen, she shall be restored, cleansed, forgiven, and become a joy and rejoicing in the earth. It is proper to add as well that the deeper meaning of verse 14 is probably Christ Himself, "The Priest upon His throne," who will supply Israel as He now supplies the church with His own Holy Spirit!

The Flying Roll and the Ephah, 5.

The two visions in chapter 5 are perhaps as mysterious as any in the book, and like that of the four chariots which follows in chapter 6, they seem to express the idea of judgment. That the "flying roll" has that significance would seem plain by a comparison with Ezekiel 2:9, 10, and Revelation, chapters 5 and 10, where similar figures have such meaning. "The vision must have been one of exceeding great terror," says the writer to whose book allusion has been made. "Imagine a roll of immense size, probably illumined at night with fire, moving over the Heavens, and inscribed with the curses of an angry God! Wherever it moves its awful message is seen; nothing is hid from its awe-inspiring presence. Such an awful judgment is coming by and by, when our God will keep silence no longer." We have seen hitherto that judgment is certainly coming upon the Gentile nations, and that Israel also is to be purified before she is finally restored, and it may be that to both these facts the present vision applies.

What is now seen (6)? An ephah or measure may fairly be taken as an emblem of trade or commerce. What was seen sitting in the ephah? What is the woman said to symbolize (8)? The whole figure then represents wickedness in commerce. What is now done with the ephah and whither is it carried? The land of Shinar at once suggests Babylon again, of whose revival in the latter days mention has already been made. The book entitled "Babylon and the East," by B. W. Newton, spoken of in an earlier lesson, throws much light on this prophecy, but those who are unable to obtain that English volume will find the one by Gaebelein on Zechariah mentioned above very interesting at this point. I quote a sentence here and there from the latter. The whole vision he holds identical with the final Babylon and the harlot of Revelation. Every one knows that commercialism is very prominent in Revelation 18 as the climax of ungodliness. It will be well to read that chapter in connection with Habakuk 2:12, and James 5. Babylon is real, and the woman is the commercial spirit that will reign there at the end. The same spirit of self that prevailed in the early Babylon of Genesis 11, will build up and prevail in the last Babylon of Revelation 18. The description of the Babylon of Nebuchadnezzar's day will fit the one to come, Isaiah 14:4, 17:5, 47:12, 51:41; Jeremiah 50:38, 51:7, 13. It will be the city of "the prince of this world," the seat of the Antichrist. Rome is the offspring of Babylon, but Babylon is the mother of Rome. It is noticeable that certain prophecies concerning Babylon in Isaiah and Jeremiah have not yet been fulfilled, while at the same time these prophecies are closely identified with those in Revelation 17 and 18. The drift of things in our day is in the direction of such a

Commercial Center in the East,

Eastward the course of empire now takes its way. Our possession of the Philippines, the awakening of Japan, the "open-door" in China, the railroad planned to India, the quickened interest in the Jews' return to Palestine, known as "Zionism," and many other things point that way. At the same time we must not be too hasty in forming our opinions with reference to unfulfilled prophecy, or uncharitable and dogmatic in asserting them. Let our attitude be that of prayerful searching of God's Word, humble attendance upon those who, taught of the Spirit, are in their turn able to teach us, and only kind and gentle expression of that which we believe to be truth when it is opposed by others who may seem to have as good a right to be heard.

As this lesson has expanded more than was expected we shall close with a few words on the last of the visions—the four

chariots, leaving the contents of the concluding chapters for consideration at the opening of the next lesson.

What points of similarity do you perceive between this vision and the first of the series? The riders in the first have been described as the advance guards of the judgment coming upon the nations; in this case, however, the judgment seems to be put into execution. The mountains of brass from between which the chariots go forth are sometimes identified as Moriah and Olivet, and the valley as Jehoshaphat, of which more in the next lesson. Compare Joel 3:2. The chariots are apparently Divine agencies of judgment (verse 5). Compare also Revelation 6. It is very significant that after the Spirit of God has been said to be "quieted" by the judgments in the north, there should follow the symbolic crowning of the high priest (chapter 6:9-15), but the intensely interesting subject thus opened to us must be postponed for the next lesson.

REVIEW of the last lesson:

1. What historical book should be read in connection with Zechariah?
2. What is the period of Zechariah with reference to the captivity?
3. What is his two-fold mission?
4. How would you describe the two parts of this book?
5. Give the outline of part one.
6. By what title is Christ thought to be referred to in this book?
7. What particular chapter affords rich material for a Gospel sermon?

The New Lesson.

The last lesson completed the consideration of the nine visions, closing with the spectacle of judgment on the nations and the quieting of the Divine Spirit with the result. The prophet is now called upon to do something in the nature of an object-lesson, which would seem to symbolize that great future event which will follow the judgments referred to, viz: the manifested reign of Christ over the millenial earth. Who have now come from Babylon on an embassage of some kind (10)? Whose guests are they (same verse)? What precious articles do they seem to have brought with them as gifts for the temple (11)? What is the prophet to do with some of this silver and gold? What is he to say in connection with this transaction (12-13)? What then shall be done with the crowns, and why (14-15)?

That this whole transaction is symbolic is plain from two or three points of view. In the first place, the royal crown did not belong to the high priest or any other son of Levi, but to the tribe of Judah in the line of David. In the second place, there is the expression "Behold the Man whose name is the Branch!" To whom, as we have already seen, does that name belong? How significant the words, "Behold the Man!" On what ever memorable occasion were they afterwards used and by whom? Is it not strange that the Jews of Pilate's day did not recognize the phrase? Then in the third place, we have the declaration, "He shall build the temple of the Lord." To whom in the fullest sense can this apply, save to Christ? And then, "He shall bear the glory," and "He shall be a priest upon His throne." Of none other than Christ has this ever been predicted. He only is the priestly King. Compare Psalm 110, and Hebrews 7. What language in verse 15 bears a possible reference to the Gentiles in that day? On what condition is all this to be fulfilled (same verse)?

The Rules for Fastings, 7, 8.

What gave occasion for these chapters (7:1-2)? Read these verses in the Revised Version and you will see that it was certain men of Bethel who had sent these messengers with their inquiry. How does God speak of their former fasting, had it been agreeable to Him or otherwise (4-7)? Were they to continue that kind of fasting, or adopt another (8-10)? Had they been instructed in this manner before, and to what purpose (11-12)? What consequence had fallen upon them for their disobedience of which the Lord reminds them (13, 14)? On what subject is the prophet now directed to speak (8:1-8)? It looks as though it were quite distinct from the preceding one, and yet it will be shown to be directly connected with it. Of what period in the history of Jerusalem do you think he is now speaking, his own period or that of the future (4-15)? On the supposition that he speaks of the future, will there be fasts in those days or will they be turned into feasts (18-23)? This shows us very clearly I think that these two chapters really belong together, and although they cover a good deal of space in time, yet the subject is one.

Part Second of the Book, 9-14.

It was stated in the previous lesson that the first part of the book, chapters 1-8, referred chiefly, though not entirely, to the prophet's own time. It is now seen the sense in which that is true. The basis of all the prophecies in that part had a historical relation to the period then present. They were uttered, so to speak, to cheer and encourage the people in the work of re-building the temple. And yet, after all, there is not one of them that did not take cognizance of the far future. Indeed, some would say that they had little bearing on the prophet's own time in comparison with the remoter and completer application. However that may be, one thing is quite clear, viz: that the discourses of this, the second part, deal almost entirely with the future.

Historical Pre-View.

It will aid in the understanding of these chapters if we recall a few historical facts. At the date of this book the Medo-Persian was the great world-power to which the Jews were subject. They were followed by the Greeks, and the Greeks by the Romans. During the Roman regime our Lord was crucified and Jerusalem destroyed. Now comes the present interregnum so far as Jewish national history is concerned, which will continue till Israel is once more in Jerusalem, in covenant with Antichrist, and about to pass through the tribulation of that period prior to her final deliverance and blessing. Here then are three distinct periods in Jewish history which we will call, the Grecian period, the Roman period, and the final period. I think Zechariah treats of each of these periods in the chapters following, and while I confess to great difficulty in the explanation of them even from the synthetic point of view, yet I will do what I can to hypothecate their meaning.

I The Grecian Period? 9-10.

You will recall from the study of Daniel that this period begins with Alexander

the Great, the notable horn between the eyes of the he-goat. When this truly wonderful man crossed from Greece into Asia he swept down the Phoenician and Palestinian coast of the Mediterranean, besieging and capturing Damascus, Sidon, Tyre, Gaza and other cities in the south Philistian country. But strange to say, he passed by Jerusalem more than once without doing it harm. The Jewish historian Josephus explains this by a dream which the great monarch had, and which was remarkably fulfilled by the appearance to him at Jerusalem of the high priest and his train. However this may be, the opening verses of chapter 9 give us the prophetic outline of his career at this time. Read verses 1-7. For the deliverance of Jerusalem which actually occurred, read verse 8.

But now we come to a further illustration of the law of double reference, for the same verse which speaks of the deliverance of Jerusalem from Alexander, speaks evidently of another and more lasting deliverance which can only find fulfillment in the latter times. Please indicate the part of the verse which does this. What shows that this ultimate deliverance, thus foreshadowed, is connected with the coming of Christ (9)? When were these words fulfilled at least in part? Matthew 21:5. What shows that their complete fulfillment, according to the law just mentioned, is reserved for the latter times, or Christ's second coming (10-11)?

The Maccabees.

It will be remembered that on the death of Alexander his kingdom was divided into four, one of which, that of Syria, was subsequently reigned over by the wicked Antiochus Epiphanes. He invaded the land of Judah and sought to force the idolatry of the Greeks upon the Jews. A bitter struggle ensued in which a handful of heroes, the Maccabeans, under the hand of God, finally liberated their people. It is to this event, or series of events, that verses 13-17 are thought to primarily refer, and yet as in so many other instances, they are only a partial fulfillment after all, and as the following chapter would indicate, foreshadow the greater trouble coming upon Jacob in the last time, and the greater deliverance to follow. As we have so often treated of chapters similar to this we may venture to suppose that the class will be able to obtain some idea of its drift and meaning without further analysis.

The Roman Period? 11.

The period of Greek supremacy is at an end, and we have reached the events in the Roman period culminating in the rejection by the Jews of the Son of God. The eleventh chapter opens with a scene of judgment (verses 1-6). Then follows the cause of it (verses 7-14). It will be noticed in verse 4 that the prophet is commanded to do a symbolic act, and at verse 7 he is seen in the performance of it. What is this act? There will be little doubt in any mind after reading the complete context, that in this act he is the type of the Good Shepherd, Jesus Christ. Compare Matthew 9:36, and John 10. What does the Shepherd carry with Him to guide and protect His flock? There is difficulty in explaining the meaning of these staves unless we adopt that hinted at in verses 10 and 14, where "Beauty" seems to refer to the Divine covenant, and "Bands" to the union between the ten tribes and the two.

Who are seen to be "cut off" in verse 8? It is generally supposed that these "three shepherds" "stand for the three classes of rulers that governed Israel," priests, prophets and rulers, Jeremiah 2:8, Matthew 16:21. Our Lord pronounced woes against them (Matthew 23), and when the city was destroyed their rule came to an end. What portion of the flock paid attention to and were fed by the shepherd (11)? Compare Matthew 5:3, 11:25, 1 Corinthians 1:26-29. How does verse 12 point to the rejection of the Shepherd by the flock? What incident is foreshadowed in the next verse?

The Foolish Shepherd.

Whom is the prophet now commanded to impersonate (15)? What person yet to come will answer the description in verses 16 and 17? Can this be any other ultimately than the Antichrist? Read the sad words in John 5:43.

The Final Period, 12-14.

I believe that all the prophecies in this section of the book are yet to be fulfilled, and that the fulfillment takes place at the period hitherto so frequently referred to. It is the time when Israel is once more in Jerusalem in the national sense, though at first in an unconverted condition.

We saw in the book of Daniel that the Antichrist would at this time enter into covenant with Israel, and afterwards, (in the middle of the last period of seven years), break that covenant. Then "the time of Jacob's trouble" begins, the nature of which will in part be the combination of the Gentile nations, i. e., the Roman world, against it. Antichrist himself will be at the head of this combination doubtless, if we may judge from a comparison of Daniel with Revelation. It is at this point, when the nations are besieging the Holy City that the present "burden of the word of the LORD" begins (12:1, 2). In the former siege of Jerusalem by the Romans (A. D. 70), the latter were victorious. What language in verses 2 and 3 indicate that the opposite will be true now and that the

Jews will be Victorious!

Which of the twelve tribes will be singled out for distinction at that time, and

why (7)? What shows that this victory will be of a supernatural character? Read carefully in the Revised Version the remarkable utterances in verses 4-8 inclusive. What shows that the conversion of the nation of Israel will be co-incident to this victory (10)? What shows that the first effect of their spiritual awakening will be a feeling of sadness? What shows that this will be a general and also a particular mourning (12-14)? For the basis of the comparison in this case compare verse 11 with 2 Chronicles 35:22-27. See marginal reference.

What shows that their sins will be forgiven (13:1)? And their land purged of idolatry, spiritualism and the like (2-6)? To what extent will their tribulation affect them punitively (8, 9)? What description of this tribulation is found in chapter 14:1, 2? What further evidence have we of the supernatural interposition of Jehovah on their behalf (3)? Whose feet shall

Stand on the Mount of Olives (4)?

Compare with this Acts 1:9-12, 3:19-21. Who will come with Jesus at that time (5)? Compare 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18. What physical phenomena will accompany this great event (4, 6-8)? What joy will the earth see (9)? And Judah and Jerusalem (10, 11)? What final punishment shall fall on their enemies (12-15)? What feature of the millenial age is revealed in verse 16? What indicates that although the Lord shall then reign and righteousness prevail, there may be those whose worship and service will not be gladly voluntary (17-19)? Compare Revelation 20:7-9. How does this wonderful and glorious prophecy conclude (20, 21)? "Even so, come, Lord Jesus!" Do you say, "Amen?"

The Word Outline.

The word outline of the first part of the book, chapters 1-8, was given in the previous lesson, but that of this part might be stated thus:

Prophetic History of Israel to Messianic Times.

1. The Grecian period, 9-10.
   - a. Conquests of Alexander. 9:1-7.
   - b. Deliverance of Jerusalem, 8.
   - c. Greater deliverance through Christ, 9, 10.
   - d. Deliverance through the Maccabees, 11-17.
   - e. Greater deliverance through Christ, 10.
2. The Roman period, 11.
   - a. Forecast of judgments, 1, 2.
   - b. Indictment against false shepherds, 3-6.
   - c. Christ feeding the flock (first advent), 7-11.
   - d. Christ rejected by the flock, 12-14.
   - e. Abandonment of the flock to the false shepherd (Antichrist), 15-17.
3. The final period, 12-14.
   - a. Gentile nations besieging Jerusalem, 1, 2.
   - b. Jehovah's defence, 3-9.
   - c. Israel converted, 10-13:1.
   - d. Remnant delivered, 8, 9.
   - e. Appearance of the Messiah, 14:4-7.
   - f. Millenial blessing, 8-21.

This closes our work in the Old Testament, and our next lesson will be Matthew 1-16:12.

NEW TESTAMENT.

AS we leave the Old for the New Testament we find ourselves in quite a different atmosphere. In the former we dealt with Israel chiefly, but in the latter we deal with the church. The hope of the one is earthly, the other Heavenly. All through the Old Testament we have been told of a kingdom to be set up in Israel with Jerusalem as its center, over which Christ is to reign. This kingdom is yet to come. That it would have come long ago had Israel been faithful there can be no doubt, but that it shall yet come is almost equally unmistakable. In the meantime the king has been rejected, and God is working out in the history of the church, (a separate body from Israel altogether, but composed of Jew and Gentile), a great mystery "which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men." Ephesians 3:2-12. The church, which came into existence on the day of Pentecost, (Acts 2), is the mystical body of Christ. In the day when Christ's glory is manifested that of the church will be manifested also. When He reigns over the millenial earth, with Israel as His vice-regent, the church will reign with Him. These things will appear, I think, as we proceed, but let us not fall into the error at the outset of confounding the things that differ—Israel and the church.

Caution.

I would remind the class of the absolute necessity of reading the books as we proceed, in order to get the best out of the work we are trying to do. Keeping this in mind, I try so to arrange and prepare the lesson each week that all who are following the course will be driven to do so with Bible in hand. Please look back to the introductory lesson and freshen your minds as to the rules there laid down. You are to read the lesson assigned in the Bible in advance. You are, if possible, to read it continuously, that is, without observing the arbitrary divisions into chapters and verses. You are to read it repeatedly. The oftener the lesson can be perused before you take up this help, the more interested will you be, and the more valuable and lasting the aid you will receive. You are to read it independently, that is, without commentaries and the like, until after you have gotten some general idea of its outline on your own behalf. The assistance you receive here from week to week should only be a sort of supplement to what you have "dug out" for yourself. You are to read it prayerfully. The Holy Spirit is the great, and after all, the only real teacher of His own Word. Cultivate an acquaintance with Him by faith and prayer, that the result may be seen in your spiritual quickening and that of others through you.

Why Four Gospels?

I doubt not the question at the head of this paragraph has often come into your mind. Why was not one Gospel sufficient? And if more were required, why not just two? But if more than two, why not five or a dozen? Why just four? Several answers have been given, but the most satisfactory to me is that the four Gospels were penned to meet the peculiar necessities of the four representative peoples of that day. Matthew, it is thought, wrote for the Jew, Mark for the Roman, Luke for the Greek, and John, about a generation (thirty years more or less) after the others, for the Christian church composed of Jew, Roman and Greek.

The arguments leading to this belief will be briefly touched upon in connection with our study of each Gospel, but in the meantime if any desire to pursue the subject at length they will be much interested in a volume with the same title as this paragraph, by D. S. Gregory, D. D., perhaps obtainable through the Funk & Wagnalls Co., New York. Andrew Jukes also has an interesting little volume called "The Differences in the Four Gospels," published (I think) by the Revell Company.

The Gospel for the Jew.

It is generally believed that Matthew wrote distinctively for the Jewish people throughout the world at that time. Indeed there is a tradition that he wrote originally in the Hebrew tongue though no proof of the fact exists. Nevertheless that his Gospel was intended to fit their need is the judgment, I believe, of all the Christian writers who lived nearest to that period. But it is evidenced indeed by the contents of the book itself when compared with the others. The central plan of Matthew's Gospel is to reveal Jesus as the Messiah of the Old Testament prophets. The Jews, of course, would have had no interest in any one purporting to be their Messiah who did not answed to the portrait given Him in their sacred oracles. Hence Matthew again and again, as you must have noticed, quotes the prophets as substantiating this or that, and says that this or that was done in order to fulfill the prophets. Moreover, the Jews must be very certain about the genealogy, the Abrahamic descent of one purporting to be their Messiah, hence Matthew is careful at the outset to trace the line of Jesus to that source. And then again, they were expecting their Messiah to set up an earthly kingdom when He came, for which reason Matthew says more about the "kingdom" than any other of the Gospels. It is, sometimes called, for this reason, the Gospel of the kingdom. There are other internal evidences of this nature, but these hints must suffice.

The Object Ahead.

Let me inform the class once more that the purpose in view is chiefly to become acquainted with the great outline facts of these different books of the Bible. Ex-

planation and interpretation is not one object. The synthetic study of the Bible raises questions, but not necessarily to answer them. The latter work belongs to a different branch of Biblical science altogether. At the same time consistency makes it necessary to admit that sometimes the fact itself can not be easily distinguished without some explanation or description accompanying it. This was seen to be true to a very great extent in our recent study of the prophets, and will again be in evidence more or less in some of the epistles and the book of Revelation; in the meantime let us diligently seek the facts. Not until these are ascertained and held in mind are we in a position to pursue any further or deeper study of the Word.

The Facts of Our Lesson.

If you were asked to name the great facts in the first chapter of Matthew's Gospel, what answer would you give? You would say, here we have the genealogy of Jesus traced to Abraham, and the angelic announcement of His birth to Joseph. What is the central fact of chapter 2? Answer: The flight into Egypt. Chapter 3? The baptism of Jesus by John. Chapter 4? The temptation of Jesus by Satan. Chapter 5-7? The sermon on the Mount. Chapters 8-9? Miracles of healing. How many miracles are there in this group? Can you name them in order? Please endeavor to do so as it will be of advantage in comparing the other Gospels. The task of remembering all the miracles of Jesus is not great, and you will have almost mastered it when you are able to identify those recorded in Matthew.

This affords an opportunity to refer to an illustration of Matthew's style as compared with the other Gospels. He is led by the Holy Spirit, as in this instance, to group together things that have a common likeness to one another without reference to the relative time when they occurred. Reading the first Gospel alone, you would suppose that these nine miracles occurred practically at about the same time and in this order of time. But when you compare the other Gospels you find that events and lapses of time intervened of which Matthew makes no mention. It is somewhat important to observe this principle in other illustrations to which attention will be duly called.

What is the central fact of chapter 10? The commission of the twelve disciples sufficiently differentiates that chapter. But what is it that Matthew groups together in chapters 11 and 12? Would you say they were the doings or sayings of Jesus, miracles or discourses? You will probably decide on the latter. But has your reading been sufficient to enable you to discover just how many discourses are in the group? May we not say four? How shall we name and define them for future reference? Shall we call the first a discourse on John the Baptist (chapter 11)? The second on the Sabbath day (12: 1-13)? The third on

The Sin Against the Holy Ghost, 23-37.

and the fourth on a sign (40-45)?

Please observe here the value of the synthetic study of the Bible in the way it enables you to grasp the scope of a given passage, and puts you in possession of outlines for Bible-readings. A piecemeal reading of chapter 11, for example, would cause you to miss much of the force and beauty of that familiar text, "Come unto Me, all ye that labor and are heavy-laden," (verses 28-30). But when we see it as part of the discourse on John the Baptist, and really the application of it, it stands before us in a kind of new and picturesque relation that gives it added preciousness in our eyes. Look at the chapter again. What was the event introducing it (1-6)? About whom does Jesus now begin to speak (7-15)? How had John been treated (16-18)? How had Jesus been treated (19)? What judgments did such obstinate and inconsistent conduct result in (20-24)? What suggestion have we as to why these people remained in unbelief (25)? How is the opposite class of persons described in the same verse? Who alone has the power to reveal these things of the Father unto the babes (27)? To which of the two classes does Jesus now address Himself (28)? What does He offer them? One can see at a glance the added power to be obtained in the use of this passage as a text when it is "worked up to" after such a method, and when the whole scene is graphically set before the mind's eye of the hearer.

It will repay the effort to look a little closer at the second discourse. What gave occasion for it (12:1, 2)? What particular doctrine was inculcated (7, 8)? With what miracle was it subsequently impressed (9-13)? As you go through the Gospels you will find that Jesus delivered three or four discourses on the Sabbath day. Each was occasioned by a different circumstance, illustrated by a different parable, emphasized by a different miracle and taught a different lesson. It is important to be able to identify and distinguish between them for a very practical reason. Suppose you were called upon to give an address on this same subject yourself, what theme could be more to the point than this: "The teachings of Jesus concerning the Sabbath?" And what would be easier than to arrange His various discourses into one, telling the circumstance giving rise to each, and the other features associated with it, but especially the different truths relating to the Sabbath which it was evidently in the mind of our Lord to teach?

See the advantage of the synthetic reading in the case of the third discourse. What occasioned it (22)? What objection

was raised to this miracle (24)? What arguments did Jesus employ to refute it (25-30)? What solemn warning against attributing the work of God to Satan did He now express (31, 32)? What then is "the sin against the Holy Ghost" according to this context? How many earnest Christians are troubled about this sin, not knowing whether they have been guilty of it because not knowing what it is! How simple an explanation may be here obtained!

What is the subject of chapter 13? How many parables are in this group? Can you name them in order? Please make yourself master of them in this sense for the same reason as applies in the case of the miracles (chapters 8 and 9). There are not so many parables but that we might easily know them all as well as the connection in which they stand, and if we master these in Matthew more than half the battle is won. There are three such groups of parables in this Gospel, and as in this case they are all

Parables of the Kingdom.

in accordance with that distinctive feature of Matthew set forth above. But this group we might distinguish from the others by the location where they were delivered, the sea of Galilee, and call them the parables by the sea.

The next two chapters (14, 15), contain another group of miracles, and I have usually named them miracles of feeding. Be careful to observe that there are two distinct miracles of that kind. What differences do you notice? What were the circumstances leading up to each? How many were fed in each instance? What quantities of food served as the outer basis of the miracle in each? What miracle followed in the first case? What miracle preceded in the second? In what way does Jesus employ these miracles in the subsequent teaching of His disciples (16:1-12)?

Let us now gather up the great outline facts in this way (by chapters):

1. Genealogy and birth.
2. Flight into Egypt.
3. Baptism.
4. Temptation.

5-7. Sermon on the Mount.

8-9. Miracles of healing.

10. The twelve disciples.

11-12. Discourses.

13. Parables by the sea.

14-15. Miracles of feeding.

I have caused the present lesson to end at this point in order to avail myself, and give the class the benefit, of the excellent divisions of this Gospel by Dr. Gregory in the book mentioned above. He classifies it in five parts, "presenting the successive stages of the work of Jesus as Messiah in establishing the kingdom of Heaven." Two of these parts have been considered in this lesson, for the following analyses of which credit should be given to the author named.

I. The Advent of the Messiah, I-IV: 11.

a). Jesus had the origin of the Messiah of the Old Testament prophets, (1), in His descent from David and Abraham, 1:1-17; (2), in His Divine origin and human birth, 1:18-25; (3), in His places of birth and residence, 2:1-23.

b). Jesus received the preparation of the Messiah of the Old Testament prophets, (1), in the forerunner, 3:1-12; (2), in His public consecration and recognition, 13-17; (3), in His internal girding for the work, 4:1-11.

II. The Public Proclamation of His Kingdom, IV: 12-XVI: 12.

a). Jesus unfolded the law of the Messianic kingdom and demonstrated His authority according to the Old Testament prophets. Observe (1), the place where His mission began and the results following, 4:12-25; (2), the constitution of His kingdom, 5-7:29; (3), the power He exercised, 8-9:35.

b). Jesus did the work and bore the character of the Messiah of the Old Testament, (1), in the choice and preliminary instruction of His disciples, 9:36-10:42, (2), in the awakening of doubt and consequent opposition to Himself, 11-12:50; (3), in a substitution of parabolic for plain teaching in presenting the mystery of the opposition to His kingdom, 13:1-53; (4), in the culmination of the opposition to Him in His rejection by representatives of all the leading classes of the people, 13:54, 16:12.

The Next Lesson.

I have hardly felt justified in giving all the Old Testament references to the above statements, feeling that those who have taken the Old Testament course in this class will easily recognize the parallelisms in a general sense, and be prepared on their own account by the comparison of marginal references and in other ways to substantiate their correctness in detail. The next lesson will be the conclusion of Matthew.

REVIEW of the last lesson:

1. What characterizes the "atmosphere" of the New Testament as distinguished from the Old Testament?

2. Why are there four Gospels?

3. What reasons can you assign why Matthew wrote for the Jews?

4. Give the outline facts of the first fifteen chapters of Matthew.

5. Name a peculiarity of Matthew's "style" as compared with the other evangelists.

6. Name the themes of the four discourses in chapters 11 and 12.

7. Name the "parables by the sea."

8. How might the second group of miracles be characterized?

9. Into how many parts has this whole Gospel been divided?

10. On what plan have these divisions been made?

11. Name those covered by this lesson, giving chapters and subjects.

The New Lesson.

If you were asked the central fact in chapter 16 you would probably say, "Peter's confession of Christ," and in chapter 17, "The transfiguration." Let us now put these two facts together in order to see how one is related to the other. Here we have another illustration of the value of the synthetic plan of study, for the chapter division here separates two things which should not be sundered. We fail to see the peculiar tenderness and condescension of Christ towards His disciples in this matter, and the immediate reason for the transfiguration taking place at this time save as we connect with the latter event those events immediately preceding it.

After Peter's Heaven-taught confession (16-17) what revelation does Christ make to His disciples (21)? Just why Jesus waited until now to tell them this we do not know, but it is significant that it was not made known to them until He Himself became known as the Messiah. What effect did the announcement make on Peter (22)? It doubtless had the same effect on all, and Peter simply acted as spokesman. To understand the matter you must remember that up to this time, and even later, the thoughts of the twelve were very worldly and selfish. The Messiah they supposed would establish His earthly kingdom right away, and they as the nearest persons to Him, would have the chief places. If, however, He was about to be killed instead, their hopes had fallen to the ground. There must be some mistake! On what subject does Jesus now discourse to them (24, 25)? Nevertheless, how does He encourage them (27)? This is the first intimation we have received of

The Interregnum

between His first and second coming. His kingdom is to be set up He tells them, and they are to be rewarded, even greater than they had expected, but not now. The emphasis in verse 27 should be on "then."

The disciples, however, might still feel discouraged and doubtful. What further is said by Him to quicken expectation (28)? How long after this was it until the transfiguration (17:1)? What satisfying effect did it produce (4)? How, or in what sense, could the transfiguration be said to fulfill the promise in 16:28? Compare 2 Peter 1:15-18. It was a foregleam of the coming kingdom—the kingdom in embryo.

The Second Group of Discourses, 18-20.

Personally, I remember the next three chapters as those containing the second group of discourses. But before considering their contents your attention is asked to a point of historical importance, chapter 19:1. Into what part of the country had Jesus now come? As a matter of fact, all the intervening chapters since the third and fourth describing His baptism and temptation, have given us a record of what Jesus said and did in Galilee. According to Matthew, i. e., if we had no other record to compare with his, it would appear that Jesus had not entered Judea since those events at the beginning of His ministry. Moreover, this entry into Judea is His last so far as Matthew informs us. It is necessary to read John in order to see that He had visited Judea some three or four times before this. Some of these discourses in the present group, therefore, were uttered in Galilee and some in Judea; nevertheless we will put them all together in our thought just as the record gives them. I think there are five, and I am accustomed to name them as follows:

1. Little children, 18:1-14.
2. Human forgiveness, 15-35.
3. Divorce, 19:1-9.
4. Earthly riches, 16-20:16.
5. Humility, 20-28.

It will be better for you to examine them for yourselves with a view of putting your own titles upon them. This will make you know and remember them more readily. The first discourse, for example, is frequently spoken of as on "humility," or "the new birth," or "the way of entering the kingdom." In this view the little child is used by Jesus simply as a matter of convenience in teaching the disciples something. But in the other view the child is brought into prominence for its own sake as well as, or even more than theirs.

Touching Human Forgiveness.

what principles or rules of procedure are laid down in verses 15-17? What power of excommunication is given the church in verses 18-20? To what extent are we called upon to exercise the grace of love in such instances (21-22)? How is this truth illustrated and the duty enforced

(23-35)? Put the story of the two creditors in your own words.

The discourse I have entitled "Earthly Riches" covers so much space that it may be desirable for us to examine it more particularly. I am hoping that some young preachers in the class may thus obtain a whetted appetite for Biblical and expository preaching, which is at once the simplest and in some respects the most profitable kind of preaching. By what incident was this discourse on

Earthly Riches

introduced (19:16-22)? To what reflections from Jesus did the action of this young man lead (23, 24)? What further question and answer were started by these reflections (25, 26)? What comparison did Peter seek to draw between this young man and himself and fellow-disciples (27)? How does this remark illustrate what was said above about the selfishness and worldliness of the disciples at this time? What promise is given by our Lord in this connection (28-30)? What parable does He employ to show the application of this promise to all classes of workers and for all time (20:1-16)? It is significant and should be of current interest that Jesus discoursed on the use and abuse of wealth as much as any other topic, and indeed more than most. In these days when questions of social economics are so rife, and both ministers and people need wisdom upon them, what could be more timely in the pulpit or prayer meeting than a series of Bible readings on "The teachings of Jesus concerning the use and abuse of wealth?" Plenty of material is at hand.

Your attention will be claimed for the last discourse in this group, that on "Humility" (20:20-28), only to speak of the further illustration it affords of the worldly and selfish spirit even of those nearest to our blessed Lord. How little they understood Him and the nature of His mission! How vain must have been His search for sympathy and communion of thought among such as these! Remember that the "kingdom" which this devoted mother had in mind was an earthly one soon presumably to be set up. None other of the disciples should have as good or prominent a place as her sons! They must have the first two offices and the rest might take what was left. Why do you suppose the "ten" were "moved with indignation against the two?" Was it on account of the way they had treated Jesus, or the way they had sought to treat them? What rebuke and instruction follow from the gracious lips of Jesus?

The Last Week, 21-28.

The events recorded in these last eight chapters all occurred practically within the last week of Jesus' earthly life prior to His death and resurrection. Let us pause to consider the significance of this. There are only twenty-eight chapters in Matthew all told, and yet nearly one-third of them are taken up with the account of those events culminating in His death and resurrection. Twenty chapters cover thirty-three years of His life all but one week, and eight chapters are given to that week! All the evangelists lay similar emphasis on that week; and in the case of John's Gospel, the most profound and spiritual of the four, the proportion of space given to it is much greater than here. What has this to teach us from the mind of the Holy Spirit as to the relative importance of the death of Christ in comparison with His life? Of what value to a lost world would have been His life without the sacrificial death in which it closed? Let us think of this object-lesson thus set before us by Jehovah Himself if we need an argument of this character for the atonement of sin.

Let us examine the separate events in this week and observe their relation to each other.

What is the chief event in chapter 21? In fulfillment of what prophecy did this entry into Jerusalem occur (4, 5)? Observe that this action on the part of Jesus, so unlike anything done before or afterward, was His formal and public offering of Himself to the nation as their King. Did the nation accept or reject Him as such? Observe it is not a question whether more or less of the "common people" were ready to receive Him, but what was the disposition of the leaders? Compare verses 15, 16. See also the challenge presented to Him on the day following, 23-27.

Now that the nation by its representatives has formally rejected Him, the next event is the formal rejection of the nation by Him. This you will perceive is done in the use of a series of three parables:

The two sons, 28-32.
The wicked husbandmen, 33-44.
The marriage of the king's son, 22:1-14.

What indicated that the leaders of the nation understood the drift of these parables as against them (21:45-46)? Why did they not openly take vengeance upon Him? What other plan of destruction did they put in operation (22:15)? What three classes of persons did they interest in their schemes (16, 23, 35)? How did Jesus overcome this conspiracy (41-46)? We have now perhaps reached the third day of the week, corresponding to our Tuesday.

After the futile efforts of these enemies to entangle Jesus in His talk, our Lord solemnly denounces them (23). Your attention is particularly called to the manner in which His solemn charge concludes (verses 37-39). He has formally rejected the nation, but now follows the specific rejection of Jerusalem itself (38). And yet observe that in harmony with all the prophets who preceded Him, our Lord opens for His people a door of hope. Does He say they shall never see Him

again? When does He say they shall see Him (39)? In reading verse 39 emphasize the second "ye," and you will discover that the day is likely to come when the whole nation, converted as we saw predicted in Zechariah, shall welcome Him in the language of the children in the temple two days before this.

The Second Coming, 24-25.

Christ's relationship to the nation of Israel becomes for the time being a closed chapter at this point. He has left their house unto them desolate. He has no further word to say to them, and no further opportunity to give them looking toward the establishment of the kingdom at that time. His mind is now on the future. As He and His disciples leave the temple on this sad Tuesday evening to repair once more to the hospitable home at Bethany, the latter ask Him certain questions about the destruction of the temple to which He has referred, as well as His second coming. Read 24:1-3. His reply to these questions forms the subject of the discourse covering the next two chapters. It is a very important one indeed.

The first division of His reply covers verses 4-14, and gives an outline description of the world and the professing church from that period to the end of the present age.

What did He say would be the condition of things in the world shortly after His departure (4-6)? What caution does He give them in consequence? What would be the relation of the nations one to another during this period (7, first part)? Are we to look for peace on earth in this sense therefore before Jesus comes? How does the warlike condition of nations today corroborate these things? What will be the character of God's dealings with the world during this same period (verse 7, last part)? Does this show God to be well-pleased with the world or otherwise? What will be the attitude of the nations towards the church during this same period (9)? How is the consequent declension of the church characterized (10-13)? What shows, however, that the Gospel will be proclaimed even if the world be not converted till Jesus comes (14)?

The second division of the reply covers verses 15-35, and gives a description of conditions in Jerusalem at

The Culminating Period.

This is the period already referred to so many times in the study of the Old Testament prophets—the Jews are returned in unbelief, the temple rebuilt, the covenant entered into with Antichrist, and God's hand outstretched in judgment. Compare Zechariah 11:16, Daniel 9:26, 27.

The third division apparently covers from 24:36, to the end of chapter 25, and seems to give an outline description of conditions in Christendom outside of Jerusalem during this same (culminating) period. I confess to the great difficulty experienced in seeking to fit in each of the three parables in this section to the same general system of thought, and would advise patience and caution in reaching positive conclusions. Please identify the parables by name, however, and observe that they form the third and last group of parables in this book, making thirteen in all.

The last three chapters, 26-28, while possessing the profoundest interest for the believer, are yet very plain statements of fact, and require little or no treatment from the synthetic point of view. They may be kept in mind as the passion chapter, the crucifixion chapter and the resurrection chapter.

Let us now continue our outline by chapters which was begun in the previous lesson, thus:

16. Peter's confession.
17. The transfiguration.
18-20. Discourses.
21. Entry into Jerusalem.
22. Plots of the enemy.
23. Denunciation of the plotters.
24-25. Discourse on the second coming.
26. Passion.
27. Crucifixion.
28. Resurrection.

I will conclude this lesson by giving the further division of the book as suggested by Dr. Gregory. Those of the last lesson were (1), The Advent of the Messiah, 1-4:11, and (2), The Public Proclamation of His Kingdom, 4:12-16:12. We now have

3. The Public Claim of Messiahship, 16:13-23:39.

a). Jesus claimed Messiahship with the twelve, (1), by calling forth their confession of Him (16:13-20; (2), by teaching them the lesson of His sacrificial death at the hands of the Jewish Sanhedrin (21), through betrayal by one of His own followers (17:22), and by means of the Roman rulers (20:17, 18). In connection with this instruction He confirms their faith anew by the transfiguration, and by miracles; and further enlightens them as touching their church relations and other earthly duties.

b). Jesus claimed Messiahship with the public, (1), by His triumphal entry into Jerusalem, and assumption of Messianic authority, (20:29-21:17); (2), by His conflict with the Jewish officials, ending with the judgment and casting off of them and the nation (21:18-23:39).

a). Jesus prepared His disciples for His sacrificial death, (1), by unfolding the truth of His coming in glory (24:1-43), and (2), by teaching them the true posture of His followers in waiting for His coming (24:44-25:46).

4. The Sacrifice of Messiah the Priest, 24-27:66.

b). Jesus consummated His work, as the rejected and suffering Messiah, (1), by His priestly offering of Himself in fulfillment of the law and the prophets, as

the Paschal lamb (26:1-46); (2), in His betrayal, trial and condemnation, (26:47-27:26); (3), in His experience in the hands of His executioners (27:27-66).

5. The Triumph of Messiah the Savior and King, 28:1-20.

Jesus fully established His claim to the Messiahship according to the Old Testament prophets, (1), by rising from the dead on the third day, (1-15), and (2), by His formal assumption of authority in sending forth His disciples to the spiritual conquest of the world, (16-20).

THE NEXT LESSON IS THE GOSPEL OF MARK.

REVIEW of the last lesson:

1. How would you account for the transfiguration at the time it occurred?

2. According to Matthew how many times did Jesus visit Judea after His baptism?

3. What chapter contains the record of this?

4. Name the discourses in the second group.

5. What chapters contain them?

6. What chapters cover the last week of Jesus' earthly life?

7. Name the principal events of that week.

8. Name the parables in the second group and the occasion for them.

9. Give the words in which Jerusalem is rejected.

10. What chapters contain the discourse on the second coming?

11. Name the parables in this discourse.

12. Give the outline of the whole Gospel by chapters.

13. Give the outline of the whole Gospel by divisions.

The New Lesson.

Mark, it is thought, wrote for the Romans. In corroboration of this idea we have the tradition of earliest times, the Christian writers of the first three centuries being almost, if not quite, unanimous in the opinion. But better than this we have the internal evidence of the Gospel itself. It is quite clear, for example, that Mark must have written not for a Jewish, but a Gentile people of some sort. We want no stronger proof than the fact that when he alludes to ceremonies and ordinances peculiar to the Jews he feels a necessity to explain them. Chapter 7:1-4 is a striking instance of this. I might add, too, that there are comparatively few references to the Old Testament Scriptures, as you may have noticed.

But if Mark wrote for a Gentile people, there were only two such classes to choose from, the Roman or the Greek. Now what was the distinction between these two representative Gentile peoples of that day? The Greeks were intellectual, contemplative, aesthetic. The Romans were active, energetic, warlike. The ideal of the one was wisdom, the other power, strength. An observant reading of Mark's Gospel shows that it is rather intended to meet the case of the latter than the former. For example, it is a short Gospel, the shortest of the four, brief, concise, to the point. Moreover, that which Mark omits is not so much the doings as the sayings of Jesus. The discourses are not given at length. And then again, Mark uses the peculiar word "straightway," or its equivalent, an unusual number of times. It is a word peculiar to him. Observe in the Revised Version how many times it is employed in the first chapter alone. This of itself shows that he had been selected to pen that record of the life of Jesus which would be most likely to recommend Him to a people accustomed to do things and to move with celerity in the doing of them, like the Romans. There are other incidental corroborations of this point. For example, scholars have pointed out that Mark only of all the writers in the New Testament employs Latin words in Greek form. It is noticeable, too, that he uses the Roman division of the night into four watches, chapter 13:35, while the other evangelists follow the Jewish form of only three watches. It might be shown also that Mark's personal history qualified him as a writer for the Romans, especially that part of it which brought him into close association with the ever restless and ardent Peter (1 Peter 5:13).

The Plan of the Gospel.

The foregoing observations have rather anticipated some of the things to be said about the central plan of the Gospel itself, which after all is the most convincing proof of its direction. Its opening words indicate its drift (1:1). Jesus is not to be presented as the fulfiller of Old Testament prophecy, but as "the personal embodiment of the Son of God." Everything in the Gospel is so shaped as to deepen the impression of His Almighty power. As Lange says, it is a series of victorious conflicts from beginning to end. It begins with the conquest of the four apostles, and ends with that of the whole world.

How to Study It.

After the chapter outlining given to Matthew I hardly think it desirable to pursue the same method with Mark. Indeed we shall not act on that plan again till we come to John. My judgment is that it will quicken interest in the study and perhaps be just as profitable, if we consider Mark in comparison with Matthew. For example, what does Mark leave out of his Gospel that Matthew records? And what does he add that Matthew does not contain? In seeking an answer to these questions we shall be arriving at the incidental evidence of its Roman character. Let us review the first Gospel chapter by chapter, and ask:

Does Mark give the genealogy of Jesus? Any account of His birth or childhood? His baptism and temptation? The sermon on the mount? What, if any, miracles does he omit? Discourses? Parables? Does he give the transfiguration? How about the events in the last week of Jesus' life? What, if anything, is omitted from the passion, crucifixion and resurrection chapters?

It will be noticed in this comparison that Mark gives almost nothing of Jesus' origin and early preparation for His work, but begins abruptly with His immediate preparation as a Man, by His baptism and temptation. The harmony

of this fact with what is called the central idea of the Gospel is seen at a glance.

Again, as was stated earlier, Mark omits most of the discourses of Jesus. Brief sayings are reported, which enable us to identify the discourses as given in Matthew from which they are taken, but that is all.

Most of the parables are omitted, and especially those which are peculiarly Jewish in application. It is noticeable that in the first group those which are given are the sower and the mustard seed, and both have a universal application.

As Mark deals with actions and facts we are not surprised that he retains most of the miracles, especially those which magnify the wonderful power and increasing fame of Jesus. Doubtless we shall find on closer examination that those omitted were "designed to show the relation of Jesus to the Jewish ceremonial law" or something of that kind.

In the same way I would examine myself, or the class under my charge, on the

Things Which Mark Adds.

For example, what new miracles does this Gospel contain? Parables? Sayings or events? The last three chapters will afford fruitful answers to the last inquiry

Notice that two out of the three new miracles, the deaf stammerer (chapter 7), and the blind man (8), are practically the only ones recorded in any of the Gospels in which Jesus may be said to have effected a progressive cure. Just why these should appear in the Gospel for the Romans is a point I have never seen satisfactorily explained. It will be a good subject for thought and discussion in the smaller classes that may be under your control.

Notice also two particulars in the "Passion" chapter of interest. How does Mark's account identify the man in whose house the last passover would be eaten? Whom do you suppose that young man was who fled "naked" from the garden? In the "Resurrection" chapter to which of the apostles is sent a special message to meet Jesus in Galilee? Why, do you suppose, was Peter thus singled out? How does it illustrate the tenderness and love of Jesus? Mark is thought to have written at the dictation of Peter, and indeed this Gospel has sometimes been called Peter's Gospel. If this be so, we can understand why this allusion should be found in it and not elsewhere. In this same chapter what post-resurrection appearances of Jesus are recorded other than in Matthew? How does the "great commission" in Mark differ from Matthew? What great event in the life of Jesus does Mark mention at the close, which Matthew omits? What post-ascension history of the church does Mark give? The answers to these last three questions especially will show how applicable this Gospel must have been to a people with the Roman character. They show Jesus' power, greatness, and all-conquering force in terse but wonderful terms.

Attention to Details.

The answers to some of the questions suggested above will bring to light another peculiarity of Mark as a Gospel writer which will well repay attention, and add interest to the study of the book; and that is the careful notice he takes of minor matters which neither Matthew nor any other of the evangelists refer to. He dwells upon looks, and gestures, and the outward expressions of feeling on the part of Jesus, and has been alluded to as "the exclusive master of the pictorial and scenic in describing what took place." All this likewise has a bearing on the thought that he wrote particularly for the Romans. They were not a people given to meditation and philosophical reasonings as much as others, and Mark places things before their eyes so that "he who runs may read." For illustrations of this examine such graphic penpictures as that of the storm at sea, chapter 4, or the treatment of Jesus by His townspeople, chapter 6, or His dealings with the rich young man, chapter 10. A careful comparison of these and similar places with the corresponding reports in Matthew will lighten up the lesson very much. You will find that Mark gives the element of color to what he writes. You will become intimately acquainted with him as distinguished from the other evangelists, and the conviction will grow upon you that his Gospel is not a mere condensation of Matthew's as some have supposed, but a separate work by itself with as distinctive an aim as any of the four.

Outline by Divisions.

I will conclude this lesson by giving in part, the outline of Dr. Gregory after the manner of that in Matthew. Bear in mind that the special design of the Gospel seems to be to present "the successive stages of the work of Jesus, the Divine Conqueror, in establishing His universal empire, the kingdom of God." We have then:—

I. The Advent of the Almighty King, 1-2:12.

a.) Jesus is exhibited as the Divine Son of God, (1), in His name and heralding (1:1-8); (2), in His Divine recognition at His baptism, and in the subjection of Satan and the animal and angelic world at His temptation (9-13).

b.) Jesus is exhibited as proclaiming His kingdom, (1), in so many words, and in the calling of His first subjects, (1:14-20); (2), in His powerful works with their effect on the people (1:21-2:12).

II. The Conflict of the Almighty King, 2:13-8:26.

a). Jesus teaches concerning the foundations of His kingdom, (1), as to its subjects and laws, (2:13-3:35); (2), as to its

growth and development, (4:1-34); (3), as to the omnipotence of its rulers, (4:35-5:43).

b). Jesus passes through a series of conflicts in the work of laying the foundations of His kingdom, (1), in Nazareth, with His towns-folk, (6:1-6); (2), in Galilee, in connection with the mission of the twelve, (6:6-52); (3), in Galilee again, resulting in rejection by the scribes and Pharisees of Jerusalem, (6:53-8:9); (4), in Galilee once more, with the local Pharisees, (8:10-26).

III. The Claim of the Almighty King, 8:27-10:45.

a). Jesus explains His claim by teaching that the kingdom is to be won by triumph over suffering and death, (1), in a revelation foretelling His rejection by the Jewish Sanhedrin, (8:27-9:29); (2), in a revelation foretelling the treachery of His own followers, (9:30-10:31); (3), in a revelation foretelling His death by the Roman rulers, (10:32-45).

b). Jesus maintains His claim, (1), in His public advent as the heir of David. (10:46-13:37); (2), in His triumph over the leading classes, ((11:27-12:44); (3), in His prophetic unfolding of the near and remote future of Jerusalem and His kingdom. (13:1-37).

IV. The Sacrifice of the Almighty King, 14:1-15:47.

a). The preliminary preparation for His death, (1), in the plotting of the Sanhedrin and the teaching of Judas, (14:1-11); (2), in the passover supper, (12-26): (3), in the struggle with the terrors of death (27-41).

b). The actual experience of death, (1), the arrest, (14:42-52); the trials, (14:53-15:1-15); (3), the execution, (16-41); (4), the tomb, (42-47).

V. The Universal Empire Established 16:1-20.

a). The resurrection from the dead. (1-14).

b). The great commission, (15-18).

c). The assumption of Divine Authority, (19).

d). The confirmation of the work of the disciples, (20).

The Next Lesson.

The next lesson will be the Gospel of Luke. Please compare it as you read it with the two preceding Gospels to ascertain two points, viz: what new facts and what new discourses does Luke give which are not found in them. In our study of his Gospel we may have opportunity to lay hold upon some good outlines of sermons or Bible readings.

REVIEW of the last lesson:

1. What reasons can you name for believing that Mark wrote for Gentiles?
2. That he wrote for the Romans?
3. How is Jesus presented in his Gospel?
4. Name some of the things which, in comparison with Matthew, Mark omits.
5. What does he add?
6. What peculiarity of Mark's style as a writer do you notice?
7. Give some illustrations of it.
8. Give the outline by divisions.

The New Lesson.

Luke, it is thought, wrote for the Greeks. It is evident, in the first place, that his Gospel was intended for Gentile as compared with Jews. This is seen in some of the things he adds and some he omits. For instance, it is Luke alone who mentions the commission of the seventy disciples. And whereas Matthew spoke of the commission of the twelve, yet it was especially stated that they should go only to "the lost sheep of the house of Israel." But the seventy were to go into "every city whither He Himself would come," i. e., Jew or Gentile. Take as another illustration the miracle of the ten lepers found only in this Gospel. How many returned to give thanks unto their benefactor? Was the grateful one a Jew or Gentile? It is easy to see that as in the other case, such an incident was intended to show the more universal application of the Gospel than simply to one race. The parable of the Good Samaritan is also peculiar to Luke and open to the same observation. And indeed that also of the Prodigal Son, since it is generally understood, I believe, that he represents the Gentiles, and the elder brother the Jews. Moreover "a very large portion of this Gospel is taken up with what is thought to be

Christ's Ministry in Perea,

or across the Jordan, and on His last journey to Jerusalem." Nine chapters in short, 9:51-18:14—a ministry to a Gentile race

But if Luke wrote for the Gentiles then it must have been for the Greeks. This is practically settled by the determination of Mark's Gospel, for the Romans and Greeks were the only two representative Gentile peoples on the earth in that day. As to this, moreover, we have the testimony of the Christian writers of the first three centuries, and that of the central plan of the Gospel itself, whose design seems to be to present Jesus as "the Divine Man for the redemption of the whole world."

But why should such a presentation of Jesus as this have been especially adapted to the Greeks? An answer is found in an understanding of the history and character of the Greeks and the ideals they represented. A few sentences quoted here and there from Dr. Gregory will set this before us. The Greek was the representative of reason and humanity in the ancient world. He felt himself to have the mission of perfecting man, i. e., in the sense of his intellect, taste, feeling. The greatest of poets is the Greek Homer, the greatest philosopher, Plato, the greatest orator, Demosthenes. The Greek made his gods in the likeness of himself. While the Hindu worshipped

Monstrous Emblems of Physical Power,

the Egyptian, life in all its forms down to the most repulsive, and the Roman, the emperor, the Greek worshipped man. "The man on earth, with the grandest power of thought and beauty of speech and action, was for the Greek nearest the place which the gods ought to occupy."

This brought the Greek into sympathy with man as man. The Jew could fraternize readily only with the descendants of Abraham; the Roman with him who wielded power in the empire; but the Greek could meet all the world on the common platform of humanity. The ideal man to the Greek was not a Pharisee or a Caesar, but the possessor of intellect, taste and feeling whoever or wherever.

A Gospel for the Greek must present the character and career of Jesus as that of

The Perfect Man.

"Reason and beauty, righteousness and truth, dignity and earnestness must be exhibited in their full splendor. It must open the way to a mission grand enough for man here, and bring to light an immortality beyond." This the third Gospel is felt to do in contrast from all the others. The outline by divisions showing this to be the case will be given later. But in the meantime two or three further circumstantial proofs that Luke wrote for the Greeks will not be out of place. In the first place, does Luke give a genealogy of Jesus? And if so, how does it differ markedly from that in Matthew? Does it pause at Abraham? Note that it traces His lineage back to Adam, and through Adam to God. This at once places Him in the foreground as the representative of the whole race, at the same time that it lifts the thoughts of the Greeks away from their earthly conceptions of the human origin to that of the Divine. Again, comparing Luke with the two preceding Gospels, what is he inclined to omit, the acts or the discourses of Jesus? Your reading will have led you to answer, the former. This also shows that he was aiming to interest not a people of deeds like the Romans, so much as a people of thought and reflection like the Greeks. Once more, Luke's Gospel has sometimes been called

The Gospel of Song.

Observe how many inspired songs it contains, and consider how calculated

they were to fasten the attention and arrest the thought of a cultivated and aesthetic people. Luke himself, "the beloved physician," was the most cultured of the four evangelists as the character of his Greek writing indicates. Finally, as Mark is thought to have written under the direction of Peter, so Luke is supposed to have been in like manner associated with Paul, the great scholar among the apostles. All these things put together, and almost countless others which there is not opportunity to mention here, form a sort of cumulative argument that Luke wrote for the Greeks. For the further study of so interesting a theme the class must be referred again to the books named in the opening lesson in Matthew, or to De Costa on "The Four Witnesses," or, "How to Study the New Testament" by Dean Alford, or the "Introduction" to each of the Gospels in any good commentary.

The Facts Peculiar to Luke.

Let us now come more directly to the business before us and speak of the facts peculiar to the third Gospel. Every one of them bears out the contention stated above in some manner, if there were time or this were the place to consider it. I will write down my list for you to compare with yours. Remember that, as stated in the last lesson, I am making a kind of distinction between "facts" and "discourses." It will be somewhat arbitrary, of course, and you must not be discouraged and think you are a poor scholar if your outline differs from mine. Yours may be the better of the two. The discourses will suggest some sermons and Bible readings, and we shall take them by themselves. The separate facts are few, for example:

Superscription to Theophilus.
Birth of John the Baptist, 1.
Birth and infancy of Jesus, 1-2.
Genealogy from Adam, 3.
Visit at Nazareth, 4.
Great draught of fishes, 5.
Raising the widow's son, 7.
Commission of the seventy, 10.
Healing the ten lepers, 17.

What indicates that other records of Jesus' life may have been written besides these four (1:1)? What indicates the sources of information (2)? What qualification from the human standpoint did Luke possess for his task (3)? What was his immediate object in writing (3, 4)? Theophilus is a Greek name meaning "a lover of God." What other book was afterwards addressed to him also (Acts 1:1)?

Verse 3 deserves particular attention, especially the remark about writing "unto thee in order." Luke is not only giving us "a continuous narrative, derived from the testimony of eye-witnesses, etc., but he is giving it to us chronologically" to a great extent. In this respect Luke is really the historian among the evangelists, another fact recommending his Gospel to "the accurate and philosophic Greek." He is definite, in other words, as to dates and events, and clear in his allusions to contemporaneous history, both Jew and Gentile. Compare 1:5-20, 26, 2:21, 22, 42, 3:1, 2, 23, 13:1-4, 31, 32, and other places that will suggest themselves.

This peculiarity of Luke is seen in the various details he gives in these opening chapters not only of the first beginnings of our Lord's history, but that also of His fore-runner, John the Baptist.

Analyze the facts under the head of the birth of John the Baptist. What were the names of his parents? To what tribe must he have belonged? What relation did he bear to Jesus? What song is recorded in connection with this fact?

Analyze in the same manner the birth and infancy of Jesus. While Matthew records a prenatal announcement to Joseph, to whom does Luke record a similar one? What fitness do you see in the earliest announcement of the birth to shepherds? In what two particulars is the Son of Man thus early brought under the bondage of the ceremonial law?

The Difference in the Geneological Records.

You may have noticed differences in the two lists of the human ancestors of Jesus as given by Matthew and Luke. These differences have been variously explained. It must be remembered, however, that both are incomplete and names must be supplied. They coincide till David, when Matthew takes the reigning line through Solomon, and Luke the inferior line by David's son Nathan. The best explanation I know is that Matthew gives the genealogy of Joseph and Luke that of Mary. Heli may have been the father of Mary and father-in-law of Joseph. Luke writing for the Greeks thus gives the natural pedigree and Matthew writing for the Jews the legal pedigree. Jesus was thus both legally and really the son and heir of David.

Discourses Peculiar to Luke.

Let us now turn our attention to some of the leading discourses peculiar to this Gospel, partially analyze a few for homiletic purposes. Those that particularly impress me I have identified by the following titles:

Divine forgiveness, 7:36-50.
Love to one's neighbor, 10:25-37.
Prayer, 11:1-13.
Earthly riches, 12:13-48.
Hospitality, 14:7-24.
Salvation, 15:1-32.
Earthly riches, 16:1-31.
Prayer, 18:1-14.
The kingdom, 19:1-27.

The first-named discourse will repay study in comparison with that on "Human Forgiveness" in Matthew. The story used illustratively in each will be found to be similar and yet different. In the one instance it is that of two creditors,

and in the other two debtors. Familiarity with these stories should be made the duty of all Bible teachers and preachers. The discourse on "Love to One's Neighbor" has been referred to in another connection as illustrating the universal character of this Gospel, and has often been used as a text for missionary appeals.

The Discourse on Prayer

is deeply interesting. What gave occasion for it (11:1)? Observe that in responding to this appeal Christ gave His disciples (1), a model prayer (2-4); (2), a lesson in importunity in prayer (5-10); (3), a suggestion as to the primal object in prayer (11-13). The model prayer again is capable of sub-division into a Bible-reading by itself. We have, first, the right relationship in prayer, that of a child to a parent—"Our Father who art in Heaven;" second, the right attitude in prayer, that of reverence and submission, see the next three petitions; third, the right spirit in prayer, (a), the spirit of truth, (b), the spirit of forgiveness, (c), the spirit of holiness. Each of the subsequent petitions illustrates respectively one of these points.

The two discourses on "earthly riches" should be considered in connection with the one on the same theme in Matthew, whither you are requested to look for suggestions as to their employment. The last discourse, chapter 16, presents a vivid contrast between the man who uses his wealth here to make friends for himself in Heaven by-and-by, and the man who does not. The discourse on

Hospitality

might be made very interesting and helpful. Where, and under what circumstances did it occur (14:1-6)? To whom are the remarks of Christ first addressed, the host or his guests (7-11)? To whom does he next speak (12-14)? How might the whole subject be applied to the question of the Divine hospitality (15-24)? Observe that the parable used in this case like the others referred to, is especially cheering to Gentiles rather than Jews.

The Last Three Chapters.

Those who are conducting classes in connection with this course of lessons will find it to awaken interest if they have their students make a careful examination of the passion, crucifixion and resurrection chapters in Luke in comparison with the foregoing Gospels. The first-named gives us as peculiar to Luke the strife among the disciples, the allusion to the two swords, the solemn and yet tender warning to Peter, and the reference to the ministering angel in Gethsemane. The last-named circumstance is one of the many instances in Luke's Gospel of the purpose to dwell especially upon the marks of our Lord's humanity. See such passages as 10:21, 11:27, 22:41, 22:44, 23:46, 24:39, etc.

In the crucifixion chapter, we have the record of His being sent to Herod, His address to the weeping women, and His gracious words upon the cross touching His murderers and the penitent thief. The address to the weeping women brings to mind the fact that the frequent allusions to that sex by Luke has given his book the name of "the woman's Gospel." See 7:11-16, 7:46, 8:3, 10:38-42, 11:27.

In the resurrection chapter we have the record of the two angels instead of one, the mention of Joanna, Peter's journey to the tomb, the walk to Emmaus, the physical proofs of the resurrection, and the command to the disciples to tarry at Jerusalem for the enduement of power. That Luke should say more than the others about the

Physical Proofs of the Resurrection

is quite in keeping with other intimations in his book that he looked upon things with the eye of a physician (Colossians 4:14). Da Costa in "The Four Witnesses," shows, for example, that all the maladies mentioned in this Gospel are not only described with more detail, but partly indicated by their proper technical names.

The command to the disciples to tarry at Jerusalem brings out still another fact peculiar to Luke, viz: that he gives prominence to the Third Person in the Trinity, His personality, operations and gifts. See 1:15, 35, 41-44, 46, 67, 2:25-27, 3:22, 4:1, 11:13. "For ages the Greeks had enjoyed the inspiration of genius, and it had made them learned, and wise, and eloquent, and cultivated, and beautiful, according to the standards of this world, but it had brought only moral wreck, and wretchedness, and deformity, and death. In the Holy Ghost Luke reveals to them the agent who shall cause them to attain to the Heavenly wisdom, and beauty and perfection, and life."

The Outline by Divisions.

Following the plan hitherto pursued in the study of the Gospels, we shall close the present lesson with a condensed outline of the book as given by Dr. Gregory, "presenting the successive stages of the work of Jesus as the Divine Man for the redemption of all mankind."

I. The Advent of the Divine Man, 1-4:13.

a). His origin, birth and manifestation to men, 1:5-2:20.

b). His development under law, Divine and human, 2:21-52.

c). His special preparation for His work as Savior of the world, 3-4:13—(forerunner, descent, temptation).

II. The Work of the Divine Man for the Jewish World, 4:14-9:50.

a). The teaching in the synagogues of Galilee, resulting in rejection, 4:14-6:11.

b). The teachings concerning the con-

stitution and development of the kingdom of God, 6:12-9:50.

III. The Work of the Divine Man for the Gentle World, 9:51-18:30.

a). The beginning of the last journey, and the sending out of the Gospel to the Gentiles, 9:51-11:13.

b). The portrayal, judgment and condemnation of the religious world of that age, 11:14-13:21.

c). The teachings concerning the number of the saved—the grace of salvation universal, 13:22-15:32.

d). The teachings concerning the life in the kingdom of God, 16:1-18:30.

IV. The Sacrifice of the Divine Man for all Mankind, 18:31-23:49.

a). The preparation for the sacrifice, 18:31-22:38.

b). The voluntary surrender and death, 22:39-23:49.

V. The Divine Man, Savior of all Nations, 23:50-24:53.

a). In His burial in the grave of humanity, 23:50-56.

b). In His resurrection, 24:1-12.

c). In His manifestation to His disciples, and in His ascension, 24:13-53.

THE NEXT LESSON IS THE GOSPEL OF JOHN.

REVIEW of the last lesson:

1. How would you show that Luke wrote for the Gentiles?
2. That he wrote for the Greeks?
3. What is the plan or design of his Gospel?
4. Name some of the facts peculiar to Luke in the first seventeen chapters.
5. By what peculiarity as a writer might Luke be distinguished from the previous evangelists?
6. How is this peculiarity established?
7. How would you explain the differences in the genealogical records?
8. Name some of the leading discourses peculiar to Luke.
9. What most impresses you in Luke's reports of the passover, crucifixion and resurrection?
10. Give the outline of the book by divisions.

The New Lesson.

John, it is thought, wrote for the Christian church as a whole. The first three Gospels are sometimes called the "Synoptics," because, as the word indicates, when "combined they present a general and harmonized view of Christ's life." But John's Gospel as to its contents is quite different or new as compared with them. That is not to say that he records anything which the authors of the synoptics did not know as well as he, but only that in the mind of the Spirit they were restrained from recording those things which he records because, presumably, the soil was not as yet prepared for the seed.

John wrote probably as much as thirty years later than the other evangelists, and near the close of the first century. He was in fact the last survivor of the twelve. The first three Gospels were written, speaking loosely, for the purpose of making converts out of the three representative peoples, Jew, Roman and Greek; but now that these converts were secured, and the church began to be built up and spread all over the world, other matters came up for consideration. For example, with the growth and development of the church certain deep questions began to be propounded for settlement, and certain

Errors and Heresies

began to crop out especially with reference to the Person and work of Christ. To answer these questions, and counteract these errors and offset these heresies seems to be the purpose of the fourth Gospel. It is, therefore, the profoundest and most spiritual of all, recording those acts and discourses of Jesus which more than others prove Him to be Divine, absolutely equal with God, and go down into the deep questions of the atonement, regeneration and kindred themes. For proof of this, consider such passages as those touching the two natures in the Person of Christ, 1:1-14, or those referring to the character of His work on man's behalf, 1:29, 3:16, or the whole of chapter 17.

Subjects Peculiar to John.

We shall divide this Gospel in two parts. The second part begins at chapter 12, and gives us the events in what we may call the last week of Jesus' earthly life. Almost the whole of this Gospel is new, therefore we may analyze it as we did Matthew, by chapters.

Part First, 1-11.

These chapters may be identified somewhat like this:

Preface on the nature of Christ.
Witness of John the Baptist, 1.
Wedding at Cana.
Passover at Judea, 2.
Discourse on the new birth, 3.
Discourse on the Living Water, 4.
Discourse on the authority of the Son, 5.
Discourse on the bread of life, 6.
Controversies in the temple, 7-8.
Healing the blind man, 9.
Discourse on the Good Shepherd, 10.
Raising of Lazarus, 11.

Attention should be drawn to the fact that the "preface," so-called, extends through verses 1-14, and that the Person spoken of as God, verse 1, is identical with Him who was made flesh, verse 14. Thus at the very beginning of the Gospel do we obtain a clue to its purpose and are we introduced to the deep mystery of the two natures in Christ—Divine and human. Compare Philippians 2:5-7. In this preface or prologue let it be further noted that by extending it a little, we have a manifestation of Christ not only in His absolute eternal Being, but particularly as Life, 1-4, Light, 4-13, and Love, 14-18.

Attention should be drawn likewise to Christ's visit to Judea, chapter 2. Here we have another distinguishing mark as between John and Matthew, for example. According to the latter Jesus visited Judea not at all between His baptism and passion. But we are indebted to John for the information that He was there regularly every year at some or all of the great feasts. It would be interesting to observe these occasions in the study of the Gospel.

The first four discourses are, with possibly one exception, so very familiar to ordinary readers through the channels of the Sunday-school and other Bible classes, that any detailed examination of them is unnecessary in the present work. But I would call attention merely to their profundity of teaching and the way in which they thus sustain the postulate concerning the specific history and design of this Gospel. It might be well also to speak of another matter not visible on the surface, and that is the way in which they bring before us a kind of gradation in

The Work of the Holy Spirit.

In the third chapter, for example, we see Him in regeneration (3:5-8); in the

fourth, we have His work of sanctification through His indwelling in the believer (4:13, 14); and in the seventh, His work of enduement for service (7:37-39). A very instructive and stimulating discourse might be preached from the use of these three texts.

But I would like your attention more particularly to the fifth chapter, and the discourse on "The Authority of the Son." I do not feel that, as a rule, we give this discourse of Jesus that prominence in our thought and teaching which it demands. It is to my mind as important, more important indeed, than any in the book. There are some who tell us that Jesus never claimed to be Divine, never claimed absolute Deity, indeed, and on this hypothesis they hesitate to accept Him as very God. But this discourse shows not only that

Christ Claimed Absolute Deity.

but even framed an argument to support it. It is, so to speak, one of the great masterpieces in John's Gospel that differentiates it and sets it apart from all the others.

What event led up to this discourse (5: 1-16)? What charge was thus brought against Jesus (16)? How did Jesus reply to it (17)? What did these Jews understand Jesus to mean by the expression, "My Father?" Read verse 18 in the Revised Version, and you will discover that they took Jesus to mean that God was His Father in a sense in which He was not the Father of other men. But did Jesus contradict this idea, or seek to do away with this impression? On the contrary, consider how He corroborates it in what follows, verses 19-23. A good commentary here will aid to the possession of a grand sermon on the God-head of our blessed Lord. Speaking of commentaries on this book, let me recommend "Expository Thoughts on the Gospel of John," by Bishop Ryle, of Liverpool. It is not one of the latest or the greatest commentaries, but its practical thoughts are very helpful to spiritual growth, and its critical notes are all that the average member of this class could require. It is published by Carter Brothers in three volumes, but doubtless is now to be obtained at the second-hand book stores at a low price. This fifth chapter of John is fruitful of another good discourse on what we might call

The Four Witnesses to Christ.

verses 31-40, as for example, the witness of John the Baptist (32-35), the witness of the miracles (36), the witness of the Father (37), and the witness of the Scriptures (39).

You should become familiar in the next place, with the contents of chapters 7 and 8, which I have entitled "The Controversies in the Temple," and where we have a series of flashlight pictures setting before us an aspect of Christ's earthly experience with His enemies, and the conflicting opinions and emotions of the people who were round about Him, such as is not afforded in any other of the Gospels. For an illustration of realism in literature there can be nothing to surpass it. Observe when these controversies occurred (7:1, 2). The feast of tabernacles came in the fall, at about our month of October, so that these events took place presumably about six months, more or less, before Christ's last visit to Jerusalem, ending in His crucifixion. For the conflicting feelings of the people, note verses 12, 15, 25-27, 31, and 40-43 of chapter 7. For the strengthening of the opposition to Jesus, and the increasing boldness of His teaching and denunciation of their wickedness, note verses 12-19, 21-24, 39:47, and 52-59 of chapter 8. Although the subjects of these controversies are more or less disconnected, yet they are capable of a partial classification at least. In chapter 7 there are perhaps four different themes of discussion, as for example, (1), the character and test of the teaching of Christ, (15-20); (2), the nature of the Sabbath, (21-24); (3), the Divine character of Christ, (25-31); the cause and the nature of His departure from them, (32-36). The next chapter will lend itself to a similar division.

You will perceive from these controversies that the plain people were almost ready to receive Jesus as their Messiah, and a word from their leaders in His favor would have turned the scale. There is nothing in any of the Gospels which brings out this fact more clearly. The conduct of these rulers, however, is seen to justify and fulfill the prophecies concerning them in the Old Testament, and the denunciations of Jesus in Matthew 23.

The Good Shepherd.

All this leads up very easily to the discourse so precious to the hearts of true believers in chapter 10, and to understand and appreciate which it is necessary to read continuously towards it from the close of these controversies. How did these controversies end (8:59)? As Jesus left the excited and murderous crowd what next did He do (9:1-7)? How were these same rulers, false teachers, or false shepherds of the flock disposed to treat this member of the flock, and the Good Shepherd who had healed him (13-16, 26-29:34)? How did this illustrate or fulfill such passages as Jeremiah 23, Ezekiel 34, and Zechariah 11? Against whom then, were our Lord's words directed in chapter 10? Who were the thieves, and robbers, and hirelings that Jesus had in mind? It puts a new meaning into, or at least throws a new light upon, this remarkable discourse when we thus consider it in connection with its complete context. I must ask permission to again impress this synthetic method of reading the Word upon all young teachers and preachers.

The Last Week, 12-21.

For the closer spiritual as well as critical study of a large part of this last half of the Gospel, I would recommend a volume entitled "The Central Teaching of Jesus Christ," by T. D. Bernard, M. A., published by Macmillan. Canon Bernard has been referred to before in connection with another work which, like this, shows a truly spiritual mind combined with a fine scholarship. He treats chapters 13-17 inclusive, as marking a distinct section of this book both by their historical setting and their own special character. "The record of a definite stage in the communication of the Gospel,"—"a compartment in the whole scheme of the written Word," is what he calls it, "whose importance is evident from the space it occupies, being little less than a fourth of the Gospel." "The twelve previous chapters cover a period of nearly three years; these five are records of a single evening. In those we range through Judea, Samaria and Galilee; in these we remain in a single chamber of a private house. In those we are in the presence of all classes of hearers; in these we are in the inner circle which may be called the Lord's own family. It is plain that what passes here must have a value all its own." We shall treat this special section, 13-17, as part only of the larger section, 12-21, whose outline facts may be stated thus:

The supper at Bethany.

The entry into Jerusalem.

The visit of the Greeks, 12.

The last passover.

The discourse to the disciples, 13-16.

The intercessory prayer, 17.

The crucifixion, 18-19.

The resurrection, 20-21.

The point of contact with the other Gospels showing these events to be associated with the last week of Jesus' earthly life is found in the incident of the entry into Jerusalem (12:12-15). But John records an occurrence in connection therewith which the others do not mention, and which some regard as one of the most critical in the whole of our Lord's earthly career, viz:

The Visit of the Greeks.

Observe the unusual and strange formality associated with their introduction or presentation to Jesus (20-22). Observe also the strange and solemn effect the circumstance produced on the mind of Jesus (23-33). Almost every verse here calls for our closest attention. How shall we account for the fact that our Lord is so strongly and deeply moved? Some think that these Greeks were representative men of their race and clime who had come to invite Jesus to return with them to their own country, to Athens (?), where His gifts and wisdom would have been appreciated, and where He would have been exalted as was not the case among His own countrymen. They came at a critical moment surely, for as we have learned from the previous Gospels, He had just been rejected by His nation. It was a temptation, according to this view, not very different from that of the wilderness, and which put Christ to another test just before resigning Himself to Gethsemane and the cross. Had He accepted this invitation and gone with these Greeks, the world might have had another hero, but would have lost its only Savior! From this point of view, accepting its truth, we can understand the great significance of such words as those in verses 24, 25, 27, 31, and 32.

The Last Discourse, 14-16.

Circumstances will prevent my doing more than simply calling your attention to some of the distinctive subjects in this wonderful discourse, as for example: On His departure and return, (14:1-6); on His identity with the Father, (7-11); on prayer, (12-14, 16:23-27); on the Holy Spirit, (14: 15-26, 15:26-16:15); on fruit-bearing, (15:1-8); on love, (9-17). On all these themes He has discoursed at other times as recorded in synoptics, and yet John's record sounds a deeper note on every one of them than is heard elsewhere. For instance, on prayer. What new thought does this discourse afford, (16:23, 24)? On the Holy Spirit, how many new things do we learn? On Christian growth and fruitfulness what has chapter 15 to reveal?

The Intercessory Prayer, 17.

This is certainly the most wonderful prayer ever uttered when we consider who uttered it—one member of the ever Adorable Godhead to another member of the same Godhead; when we consider on whose behalf it was uttered—poor, weak, sinful creatures such as we, for that it included us is plain from verse 20; when we consider its terms, for to speak only of what it asks on our behalf, consider its four petitions:

Our preservation, 11.

Our sanctification, 17.

Our unification, 21.

Our glorification, 24.

It only remains to consider the crucifixion and resurrection chapters, 18-21. In the first, that peculiar to John is, (1), the soldiers in the garden; (2), the incident of John and the mother of Jesus; and (3), the testimony to the blood and water proceeding from the Savior's side. In the second, we have, (1), the story of doubting Thomas; (2), the incident at the Sea of Tiberias; and (3), the confession and restoration of Peter. For these distinctions in the narratives of the passion, crucifixion and resurrection the first volume of Alford's "How to Study the New Testament," will be found of interest.

The next lesson will be Acts 1-12.

REVIEW of the last lesson:

1. For what particular class did John write?

2. What name is sometimes given the first three Gospels, and why?

3. How long after the synoptics was the fourth Gospel published?

4. What seems to be the purpose of this Gospel?

5. How may it be compared with the others?

6. Give the chapter outline of the first part of the book.

7. How many visits of Christ to Judea are mentioned in this Gospel?

8. What is the title of Christ's discourse in chapter 5?

9. What chapters contain the account of the controversies in the temple?

10. What chapters give the record of the last week of Jesus' earthly life?

11. Which of these chapters have been denominated as "the central teaching of Jesus Christ?"

12. Give the chapter outline of the second part of this book.

13. How is the "visit of the Greeks" sometimes explained?

14. What are the leading thoughts in Christ's last discourse to His disciples?

15. Give an outline analysis of the "intercessory prayer."

16. What facts peculiar to John do you discover in the crucifixion and resurrection chapters?

The New Lesson.

The book of the Acts is capable of division into two general parts, each of which gives the history of one of the more prominent apostles. The first twelve chapters constituting our present lesson are concerned with Peter chiefly, and the remainder of the book with Paul.

To whom is the book addressed? What other book of the Bible studied heretofore is addressed to the same person? What does the coincidence suggest as to the author of the Acts? If Luke's Gospel gave an account of "all that Jesus began to do and teach until the day in which He was taken up," what may we infer to be the subject of the present account? Is not the inference fair that the acts of the apostles are really the acts of Jesus, by His Spirit, in the apostles? How does the reference to the "infallible proofs" of the resurrection (verse 3), suggest the closing allusions to that event in Luke's Gospel? What other point of contact with the Gospel is afforded in verse 4? What shows that even as late as this time the disciples were still looking for an immediate manifestation of the kingdom (6)? How does Christ's reply indicate that the church is not in itself the kingdom, and that the latter may still be expected? What does verse 8 indicate as to the duty of disciples while awaiting the manifested kingdom? What great event now transpires (9)? What does the language of the angels teach as to

The Second Coming of Christ?

The superscription to Theophilus and the ascension of our Lord, may be said to be the first two great outline facts of the book. We now approach the third, which we may call, the choice of Matthias. Where did this transaction take place (12, 13)? Who were gathered with the eleven apostles (14)? How many were in the company all told (15)? Is there any record of Peter's authority for this transaction? So far as you recall, is Matthias spoken of again throughout the Bible? Whom did our Lord Himself subsequently select as an apostle (chapter 9)? These considerations have led some to suppose that Peter acted with his accustomed impetuosity in this case, and that his action was not in the will of God. It seems presumptuous to say this, and I would not affirm it, but it finds more support from the fact that the baptism of the Holy Ghost had not yet been received by the church, and that the apostles had not come under His special leadership.

The Day of Pentecost, 2.

According to the Jewish calendar this came on the fiftieth day after the Passover, and hence in this instance about ten days subsequent to our Lord's ascension. Observe the number of countries represented in the multitude (9-11). The presence of so many foreign Jews is accounted for by the proximity of the Passover and later feasts which they had gathered from all over the world to attend. The providential direction in the matter is seen in the almost certain result that those who were thus converted on this day returned to their homes carrying the seed of the Gospel with them. Thus did the good news spread and churches become established everywhere, of which no historical record has been preserved. Of what prophecy was this event a fulfillment (16-21)? And yet observe that Peter does not say it was a fulfillment in any complete sense. His language is peculiar. He merely says,

"This is That"

What indicates that the prophecy of Joel was not completely fulfilled then? For example, did the wonders referred to in verses 19, 20, take place then? What day is referred to in the last part of verse 20 as certain to see the complete fulfillment? How does this agree with what we discover in our study of the Old Testament prophets?

It is, I think, a very general judgment of Christians that the church of Christ had its origin on the day of Pentecost. I think it was then we were "all baptized into one body"—the mystical body of Christ (1 Corinthians 12:13), and that the moment we believe on the Lord Jesus Christ in the New Testament sense of that expression, we do by the Holy Ghost become partakers of this "one baptism" (Ephesians 4:5). What promises of the

Lord Jesus to His disciples, can you recall as being fulfilled in the event of the day of Pentecost? To what extent did the church expand on that day (Acts 2:41)?

The First Miracle. 3-4.

What shows that although the apostles were Christians they had not as yet separated themselves from Jewish worship (3:1)? How was the name of Jesus Christ glorified in this miracle (6,13)? In his address to the people on this occasion how does Peter testify to the second coming of Jesus Christ in His manifested kingdom (19-21)? Do you recall the connection in which Moses uttered the prophecy spoken of in verse 22? What consequences to the two apostles followed this miracle and address of Peter (chapter 4:1-7)? To what extent had the church now developed (4)? What fundamental principles of race does Peter announce in his reply to his accusers (12)? How are these enemies of Christ obliged to acknowledge His Divine power (14-16)? What second principle of discipleship do Peter and John declare (19, 20)? What psalm does the church quote in praising God for their deliverance, and how is it applied to Christ (25-27)? Please read this psalm and carefully study this New Testament apprehension of its meaning.

A Photograph of the Primitive Church.

I am in the habit of considering the whole passage that follows from 4:31 to 5: 11, as a unit, and find in it a very striking picture of the prosperous condition of the church at that early day. What are some of the features of its prosperity? Perhaps we can find material for a profitable discourse in the consideration of the subject. It was

1. A praying church, 31.
2. A Spirit-filled church, 31.
3. A testifying church, 31.
4. A united church, 32.
5. A loving church, 32.
6. An endued church, 33.
7. A holy church, 33.

Who is conspicuous for his good deeds (36, 37)? Who are conspicuous for deeds of another kind (5:1, 2)? What do you regard as the root sin in the case of Ananias and Sapphira, deceit, hypocrisy or pride? What impressive antithesis is found between certain expressions in 4: 31 and 5:3? What two kinds of "filling" are there referred to? How does verse 3 indicate the personality of the Holy Ghost? How does verse 4 prove Him to be a member of the Godhead?

The Second Imprisonment.

We saw two of the apostles imprisoned in chapter 3. How many meet that fate now (5:18)? What explains the opposition of the high priest and other leaders at this time (14)? What unusual exhibitions of miraculous power attend the preaching of the apostles at this time (15)? How are they delivered from prison (19-21)? What is their answer to their accusers (29-32)? Who is providentially raised up to speak on their behalf (33-40)? Is the postulate of verse 38 always to be relied on so far as the present life is concerned? What happened to the apostles (40)? In what spirit was this received (41)? Whom did they subsequently obey (42)?

The Appointment of Deacons.

What occasioned this appointment (6:1-3)? Is it not strange that the first trouble arising in the early church grew out of money matters? In the one case the rich are responsible for it (chapter 5), and in the other the poor (chapter 6). First it is the givers, and afterwards the receivers who are not satisfied. Can we not find some lessons here for sociological instruction? Is there any "cure-all" for present Jesus Christ? Is it wise or right for us to charge all our present ills on any one class whether rich or poor?

Before proceeding further, some one may inquire why these men are called deacons? The answer is that such is the Greek word for "serve" in verse 2. It might read thus: "It is not reason that we should leave the Word of God, and 'deacon' tables." A deacon is one who serves in this sense. How many deacons were selected? What were their qualifications? Are we always careful to select such men today? What shows that these deacons did not confine themselves to "serving tables?" Who at once became conspicuous among them? In what respect was Stephen treated like his Master (12, 13)? To what may Stephen have referred in verse 14? Compare Matthew 24:2. What Divine testimony is borne to his righteousness (15)? Stephen's address (chapter 7), is a general review of the history of his people down to verse 50, where, as is supposed, he was interrupted in proceeding. This accounts for the sharper tone of reprehension which follows (51-53). What testimony to the ascended Lord is borne in verses 55, 56? What precedent do we find for praying to Jesus, verse 59? What idea of the life to come do these closing verses suggest to us? Who is conspicuously assisting at the martyrdom of Stephen?

The Gospel in Samaria.

What epoch in the history of the church followed the martyrdom of Stephen (8: 1-4)? Which of the deacons now comes into prominence (5)? Where was Samaria located? See map, or Bible dictionary. What shows that miraculous power was not limited to the apostles (6,7)? What illustration is here afforded of the plan of Satan to counterfeit the works of Christ (9-11)? What shows that there is such an experience as the enduement of the Holy Ghost which may follow conversion (14-17)? To what special mission is Philip now called (26-40)?

The Conversion of Saul.

What is the great event of chapter 9? How is the identity of Christ and His people taught in this chapter (4, 5)? How are we shown His intimate knowledge of their affairs (10-12)? What particular commission does the new convert receive (15)? What privilege is to be his (16)? How does he show his faith by his works (20)? What was the burden of his testimony (22)? How does he begin to fulfill verse 16 (23-26)? Who becomes an early friend (27)?

The Door Opened to the Gentiles.

Whose ministry again comes to the forefront (32-43)? What two great miracles are here recorded of Peter? On what mission is he sent in chapter 10? What do you understand to be meant by a centurion? Was Cornelius a Gentile or a Jew? What illustrates the difficulty of persuading even an apostle of the universality of the Gospel (9-20)? How does this story show that a moral man needs the salvation in Christ as well as one of an opposite character? Do verses 34 and 35 contradict such a supposition? How does verse 43 substantiate it? How does God set His seal to this opening of the door of the Gospel to the Gentiles (44-46)? Was this transaction sanctioned by the church at first (chapter 11)? Notice the phrase, verse 2, "They that were of the circumcision." It means the Jewish believers, and perhaps a party among them more tenacious of circumcision and other Mosaic observances than the others. We shall have much to do with such a party in the early church as we proceed. They not only gave trouble now to Peter, but continued to seek to frustrate the Gospel of grace as preached by Paul to the very end. What was the ultimate result of Peter's testimony (18)?

To what point in the history just considered are we brought back by the remark in verse 19? What effort seems to have been made by these travelers corresponding to that of Peter at Caesarea (20)? With what success (21)? Who were now placed in charge of this branch of the work at Antioch (22-26)? What makes this period epochal in the history of the church (26, last part)? Do you suppose believers were called Christians in honor or derision? Please notice that henceforth we have what might be called two different headquarters of the church—that of the Jews at Jerusalem where Peter and James seem to be in the lead, and that of the Gentiles at Antioch in Syria where Paul and Barnabas occupy a similar position. Acquaint yourselves with the location of the last-named city by the study of the map, as it will be found to be a matter of importance. What shows the love of the Gentiles for their Jewish brethren (27-30)?

The Second Martyr.

Who was the persecutor in this case (12:1)? How many of the twelve apostles were named James? How is the second of the two identified (1:13)? How does this experience of John's brother bear out Jesus' words to him in Matthew 20:22, 23? It might be well to have your attention called to the fact just now that there was a third James of prominence in the church, sometimes known as James the Lord's brother, and sometimes as James the Just. He did not believe on Jesus till after the resurrection, presumably. John 7:5. We shall meet with him in our next lesson. He is supposed, too, to have been the author of the epistle bearing his name.

How was Peter delivered from a similar martyrdom (3-11)? What became the fate of their persecutor (21-23)?

The Lesson Outline.

Superscription to Theophilus.
Ascension of Christ.
Choice of Matthias, 1.
Descent of the Holy Ghost, 2.
The first miracle and its results, 3-4.
Ananias and Sapphira, 5.
Appointment of deacons, 6.
Martyrdom of Stephen, 7.
Philip in Samaria, 8.
Conversion of Saul, 9.
Conversion of Cornelius, 10.
Gentile church at Antioch, 11.
Persecution by Herod, 12.

The next lesson will be Acts 13-28, covering Paul's missionary journeys, in the preparation of which you will be helped perceptibly by the use of a map.

REVIEW of the last lesson:

1. Into what two general divisions may the book of Acts be divided?
2. Who is its author presumably?
3. How, i. e., by what means, may the Gospel have been spread all over the world at first?
4. What importance in the history of the church is attached to the event on the day of Pentecost?
5. What does the word "deacon" mean?
6. Who was granted the privilege of opening the door of the Gospel to the Gentiles?
7. Who are meant possibly by "they that were of the circumcision?"
8. What city becomes the headquarters of the Gentile section of the church?
9. Distinguish between the three persons named James.
10. What reference to the Person and work of the Holy Spirit in the church have you observed?
11. Give the lesson outline.

The New Lesson.

The portion of the Acts of the apostles now entered upon is inclusive of the missionary journeys of Paul, and we shall consider each of these as a separate division of our lesson. The record of the first journey really begins at the first verse of chapter 13, continuing to the close of chapter 14. Whence did the journey originate (13:1)? Who originated it (2)? What was the spiritual attitude and condition of the church when thus honored by the Holy Ghost? May they not have been considering and praying over this very subject, viz: their duty to the heathen world? Who is chosen by the Spirit as Paul's companion? Have you searched out the seaport Seleucia on the map? What may have led them first to Cyprus? Whose home was on that island? What else can you recall of the personal history of Barnabas? To whom first did they proclaim the Gospel (5)? What third person is named as of their party? What distinguished person was converted on this island? In connection with what miracle of judgment (6-12)? Have you discovered Perga on the map? What incident occurred at this place (13)? How is the Antioch mentioned in verse 14 distinguished from the headquarters of the Gentile church? Observe in verses 14 and 15 the freedom and simplicity of the synagogue service, resembling somewhat the conduct of a prayer meeting in a non-liturgical church of our own time, and affording in every city a providential opportunity for the heralds of the Gospel to witness to Christ. How many classes of persons does Paul address (16)?

"Ye That Fear God"

may refer to Gentile proselytes in his audience. Observe the nature of Paul's address—historical, biblical. Observe the way in which his auditors are led to the consideration of the central theme—Jesus Christ (23). Observe where the emphasis is laid—"a Savior," not an example merely, or a teacher, or even a king. Observe the substantiation of his statement by proof—the witness of John (24, 25), of Scripture (27-29), of the resurrection (30, 31). Observe the practical application of the whole (38, 39). Few apostolic discourses are reported as fully as this, which greatly adds to its value as an inspired model for apostolic successors. It is presumable that Paul met with an opposition at this point which explains his change of tone as in the earlier case of Stephen (40, 41).

What was the immediate result of this discourse (42-44)? The ultimate result (45-50)? What was the judgment passed on themselves by these persecutors (46)? What prophecy was thus fulfilled (47)?

Do you know the location of Iconium? With what success did the message meet here (14:1, 3)? Under what circumstances did the messengers leave for Lystra and Derbe? What miracle occurred at the first-named place (8-10)? With what effect on the people (11-13)? What produced a change of feeling on their part (19)? What miracle is here wrought on behalf of Paul (19, 20)? What shows the bravery and courage of the latter (21, 22)? What principle of the Divine economy is laid down in verse 22? What allusion to and provision for church government is made in verse 23? Observe that the return journey covered a good part of the same route as that already passed over until they returned to, and reported their labors in Antioch of Syria.

This first journey might be summarized thus:—

Cyprus—Paphos—Sergius Paulus.
Perga—John Mark.
Antioch—Iconium—persecution.
Lystra—Paul stoned.
Derbe—return to Antioch.

The First Christian Council 15.

It would seem that while these brethren were absent, or shortly after their return "certain men came down from Judea" to Antioch, which taught the church there false doctrine. These men were among those "of the circumcision" referred to in the last lesson. They were Christian Jews, but evidently possessing an inadequate idea of what Christianity was. They could not accept the idea that a Gentile might become a Christian without first becoming a Jew. What did they actually teach as reported in verse 1? They said, in effect, that faith in the blood of Christ was not enough, and that in order to salvation one must supplement that faith with certain works of the ceremonial law. This struck at the very center of things, and hence the way in which the question was dealt with and finally settled by the apostolic church, is a matter of the very greatest importance to us. In our study of the Old Testament I

sometimes referred to what might be called strategic chapters, or, to change the figure, chapters which represented the Alpine heights of revelation. When one got hold of, or came clearly to understand the contents of those chapters he had gained a great deal in the conquest of revealed truth, he was able to see over a wide surface of inspiration. This fifteenth chapter of the Acts is one of those. It gives us an account of the first general council of the church ever held, and establishes for all time the great central doctrine of Christianity known as

Justification by Faith.

We will call these teachers from Judea, for the sake of convenience, by the name of "Judaizing teachers," i. e., they desired to make Jews out of Gentile Christians. We shall have to refer to some of the same class more than once or twice again in our course of study and will require to identify them by some name, and this is as good as any. What did the church at Antioch decide to do about the trouble thus started (2)? What was the outcome of their action (6)? Who was the first of the chief spokesmen at the Jerusalem council (7)? To what event does Peter refer in verses 7-9? How did Peter describe the ceremonial law (10)? In what masterly sentence did he state the great truth of the Gospel (11)? Who followed with testimony of the same kind (12)? Who seems to have occupied a commanding position in this council (13)? Our Roman Catholic neighbors make much of Peter's pre-eminence in the apostolic church, but this is not the only instance in which we shall find Peter taking a secondary place before others. It rather weakens high church ideas of one kind and another to discover that the man who practically presided over, and gave the determining sentence in the first general council of the church was not even an apostle, but James the brother of our Lord. I believe there is good authority for thus identifying him.

Observe that James bases his determination on the facts which Peter presented (14), and the teachings of the Old Testament Scripture (15-17). His interpretation of that Scripture is peculiar and very important, for a reference to which I would ask you to look back to our lesson in Amos, the book from which James' quotation is made. What is the judgment on the subject given by James, and to which the church assents (19-29)? In what manner, and by whom is this judgment to be communicated to the Gentile churches (22, 23?) In what terms are the Judaizing teachers condemned (24)? In what language were Barnabas and Paul commended (26)? In what remarkable expression is the administration of the Holy Ghost in the affairs of the church recognized (28)? From what things were they to abstain (compare verses 20 and 29)? In explanation here let it be observed that "fornication" was of course something sinful in itself from which all Christians should abstain, Jew or Gentile; but the Gentiles (heathens) needed this exhortation more especially and because their "mind had become so corrupt as almost to have lost the idea of chastity as a virtue." The other things from which they were to abstain were not sinful in themselves, but were regarded so by the Jews in the light of their Mosaic law. Hence for the sake of expediency, and on the ground of brotherly love and consideration one for another, they were asked to do this (compare verse 21). Observe that they were not asked to abstain from any of these things in order to be saved, but because they were saved.

The Second Journey.

The second missionary journey begins at 15:36, ending at 18:22. Who accompanied Paul on this trip (40)? Why not Barnabas (36-39)? What was the particular object of this journey as suggested at first (36)? Observe the providence of God in over-ruling ill. A new missionary tour, i. e., covering new ground was not at first contemplated, and yet out of this contention two such tours may have grown, and four missionaries to take the place of two. To quote the words of a Puritan divine, "God often gets up on the devil's shoulders." Nothing more is heard of Barnabas in the New Testament, but doubtless he continued faithful and useful to the end. Mark is mentioned again by-and-by and seems to have been returned to Paul's fellowship (Colossians 4:10), but the rest of this book as you have learned is taken up with the history of Paul's apostleship.

The Call of Timothy.

The missionaries started on their first journey by sea. Did they do so in this instance (41)? Has anything been recorded prior to this about the founding of churches in the provinces named in this verse? How does the fact of silence in such a case show that the church may have spread far more rapidly and widely in that early time than we suppose? What were the events occurring at Derbe and Lystra on Paul's previous visit 16:1)? What important event is associated with Lystra on this second journey (1-4)? As Paul did not regard circumcision as necessary to salvation was he inconsistent in performing that rite on Timothy? What does his action teach as to our duty to yield non-essentials for expediency's sake in the promotion of the work of the Gospel? Compare 1 Corinthians 9:19-23; also Galatians 2:1-5. The last reference will show that when a principle was at stake Paul would not permit that to be done on Titus which under other circumstances he himself performed on Timothy. O, how much we need wisdom in these matters! Thank God! for such a promise as James 1:5. Do you frequently plead it in prayer?

What do you understand by the "decrees" mentioned in verse 4? Have you looked up Phrygia, Galatia, Asia, Mysia, and Bithynia on the map (6, 7)? Is it stated why they were forbidden of the Holy Ghost to preach at this time in certain of the provinces? What is ultimately shown to have been the reason (8-10)? What is the first place in Europe (of which we have record), where the Gospel was preached (12)? Who was the first convert (14)? What illustration of demoniacal possession is afforded in this chapter (16-18)? You will recall allusions to this spiritual phenomenon and its relation to current facts in our lesson on 1 Samuel. What persecutions were endured by the missionaries in Philippi and with what spiritual fruitage (22-34)?

European Persecution.

Be careful to use your map through these chapters in identifying the different locations. How is Thessalonica distinguished from Philippi (17:1)? How long a visit does Paul seem to have made there (2)? What line of Scripture argument did he use in preaching (3)? Does this church seem to have been composed of Jews or Gentiles chiefly (4)? What remark further indicates the great advances made by the Gospel at this early time (6)? What indicates that Paul's preaching here may have laid unusual emphasis on the coming manifested kingdom of Christ (7)? To what place did these persecutions now drive the missionaries (10)? What forever makes these Bereans notable (11)? What practical application in our preaching or teaching might be made of the word "therefore" in verse 12? What further movements are now made necessary (13-15)? Where did Paul begin his ministry in Athens (16-17)? What especially astonished his cultivated hearers (18)? What rare privilege is now granted him as a Gospel preacher (19, 22)? How does the altar inscription of verse 23 show that with all their learning and wisdom the Greeks were not spiritually at rest? Do you notice any marked distinction between the texture of Paul's discourse here and at Antioch? Is this Scriptural or philosophical? How does its character harmonize with the class of persons addressed? Did the Greeks know the Old Testament Scriptures? What allusions bring out Paul's acquaintance with classical literature? Is Paul nevertheless faithful to the Gospel (31)? Is much fruitage reported?

What is Paul's next stopping-place (18: 1)? What helpful companionship is now formed (2, 3)? What practical suggestions can one obtain from verse 3? What event seems to have resulted to the quickening of Paul's energies and the extension of the work in Corinth (5)? Who now became his host (7)? What distinguished convert is mentioned (8)? What indicates that Paul may have suffered in spirit from his previous hardships in the Gospel (9, 10)? How long does he remain in Corinth (11)? How were the tables turned upon the Jews in this city (12-17)? What place was then visited briefly (19-21)?

This second journey might be summarized thus:—

Paul and Silas—Syria—Cilicia.
Derbe—Lystra—Timothy.
Troas—Philippi—jailer.
Thessalonica—Berea.
Athens—Mars Hill—Corinth.
Ephesus—return to Antioch.

The Third Journey.

The record of the third journey begins at chapter 18:23, and we may say it ends at 21:17, where Paul reaches Jerusalem, for at its close he was not permitted to repair again to Antioch. What provinces of Asia Minor are once more visited (23)? What distinguished man comes into view about this time (24)? Observe carefully both his strength and weakness as alluded to in the following verses, since they have a bearing, doubtless, on the subsequent condition of the church at Corinth as mentioned in Paul's first epistle thereto. To what great city on the coast of Asia does Paul now come (19:1)? How ought we account for the limited knowledge of the disciples he met there? Had the teaching of Apollos anything to do with it?

Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians.

written some years after this visit, contains much of the profoundest spiritual teaching revealed in the New Testament, and the question almost involuntarily arises as to whether this particular people had any special preparation to receive such deep truth? It has always seemed to me that they had such preparation. Notice two things: (1), Paul's long residence there, longer than at any other place in the record (20:31); and (2), the extraordinary work of the Spirit there on the first disciples (19:1-7), on Paul himself (11, 12), on the false prophets (13-16), and on the whole church practically (17-20). Was not this a special preparation?

What demonstrates the remarkable hold the Gospel must have obtained not only in Ephesus, but the adjacent territory (23-27)? How did opposition to it culminate (28-41)? Is any detailed record given of Paul's second visit to Greece at this time (20:1-3)? What Asiatic port was again touched on his way east (5)? What circumstance occurred there on his former visit? How is the present visit remembered (6-10)? What little word in this part of the narrative suggests that Luke was a member of the traveling party? Have you followed on the map the course of this journey from Troas to Ephesus (17)? In this strong and touching address to the elders of Ephesus what two tenets are laid down as

Necessary to Salvation (21)?

What did Paul have reason to expect at the close of this journey (23)? In what

spirit did he look forward to that experience (24)? What shows the scope and character of his ministry (27)? What language in verse 28 establishes at once the Deity of Christ and the efficacy of the atonement? Of what does Paul warn this people (29, 30)? What was one of the motives leading him to engage in manual labor (34, 35)? Was this trip brought to an end by a land or sea journey (21:1-8)? What do we recall of the previous history of Philip named in verse 8? At what place and under what circumstances did this journey terminate (10-17)?

We might summarize it thus:—
Phrygia—Galatia.
Apollos—Ephesus—Demetrius.
Macedonia—Greece—Troas.
Miletus—Ephesian elders.
Caesarea—Agabus—Jerusalem.

Rome at Last.

While at Ephesus Paul had expressed the conviction that he must visit the capital of the empire (19:21); and in his letter to the church in that city he referred to his strong desire to do so (Romans 1: 13). But little did he think that he would go there at the empire's expense and with a band of soldiers to guard him.

"God moves in a mysterious way
His wonders to perform."

What is the initial circumstance leading up to this which we may call his fourth missionary journey? Read verses 18-26. The insinuations concerning Paul (verse 21) were untrue, as we have seen. He did not teach the Jews to forsake the ceremonial law of Moses if they desired to continue its observance, provided they did not rely upon it for salvation and put it in the place of Christ. Compare 1 Corinthians 7:18, 19. This action he was now to take was intended to demonstrate that fact? How did the Jewish enemies of the Gospel take advantage of it (27-30)? Who was raised up providentially as Paul's deliverer (31-34)? What was the character of Paul's defence before the Jews (22: 1-21)? What particularly incensed his hearers (22)? How does Paul deliver himself from the examination by scourging (24-29)? Before what body does he next defend himself (30-23:1-10)? How does God sustain and encourage His servant in this crisis (11)? From what conspiracy is he now delivered, and by what means (12-31)? Where, and before whom, does he now speak (32-24:27)? With what effect on the governor? How long is Paul a prisoner in Caesarea (27)? What shows God's care over the life of His servant (25:1-5)? What right of a Roman citizen does Paul now exercise (7-11)? What further hearing is now granted the apostle (13-26:32)? How many times has the story of Paul's conversion now been repeated? Have you followed the story of Paul's voyage to Italy on the map? How many miraculous events are recorded as having taken place during this voyage? How long was Paul a prisoner at Rome?

The next lesson will be 1 and 2 Thessalonians.

REVIEW of the last lesson:

1. Counting the voyage to Italy, how many missionary journeys did Paul make?

2. Name the places visited in the first journey.

3. Name the miracles wrought in connection with it.

4. What chapter contains the history of the first church council?

5. Can you give the main facts of that event?

6. What fundamental doctrine of the Christian faith was there set forth?

7. Name the places visited on the second journey.

8. Who was Paul's companion on this journey?

9. Of what Asiatic city was Timothy a resident?

10. Who were distinguished as Christian converts in Philippi?

11. How long did Paul remain at Corinth?

12. Name the places of the third journey.

13. How long did Paul remain at Ephesus?

14. What event probably hastened his departure from that city?

15. Can you quote 20:28?

16. Give the history of the events culminating in Paul's visit to Rome.

The New Lesson.

Perhaps the class was surprised that after Acts we did not immediately take up Romans instead of Thessalonians. The latter was selected for two reasons: First, because I thought it desirable to teach the Pauline epistles in their chronological order as nearly as possible instead of their literary order; and secondly, because I felt that the class would be better prepared to work on a difficult epistle like Romans after having had some experience in dealing with two or three simpler ones. I hesitated to take this course because I believe the order of the New Testament books is a Divine order, and should not be lightly set aside, and yet I trust the end will be found to have justified the means.

The Church at Tessalonica.

For the history of the founding of this church your attention is called again to Acts 17:1-15. It came into being during which missionary journey of Paul? How long does Paul seem to have ministered there in person (2)? What two others were associated with him? To what other city were they driven by persecution (10)? Where did Paul then go (15)? What commission, however, did he first give to his two companions (15)? If you carefully read what follows down to chapter 18:5, you will perceive that Silas (or Silvanus, as he is sometimes called), and Timothy did not reach Paul again with their report from Thessalonica till the latter had left Athens and arrived for his long stay at Corinth. It is presumed that on receiving their report of things Paul at once wrote this letter to the church at Thessalonica, and if so, you see, in part, why it may be regarded as the earliest of his epistles, and hence why we study it first.

But just here a question arises, viz: What about the superscription at the close of the book? There it says, "The first epistle unto the Thessalonians was written from Athens." Does not this contradict the supposition that the brethren did not meet Paul till he reached Corinth and that he wrote it there? Now look for a moment at the Revised Version. Do you find there any superscription at all? What then, does its omission indicate? It shows that in the judgment of our best biblical scholars these superscriptions are not the books as late as the 5th century, and have no more value than may be attached to the opinions or conclusions of any uninspired investigators. Several of these superscriptions are now thought to be incorrect, and among them this particular one, in part for the reason assigned. The matter, however, is not of great importance to us at present, and need not be spoken of further.

The Spiritual State of the Church, 1.

Coming now to the epistle itself, let us get at the facts of the first chapter by the interrogative process. Who are associated with Paul in the salutation (1)? What would you say was the spiritual condition of the church, good or bad, judging by verse 3? To the trinity of graces mentioned there add the missionary spirit testified to in verses 7 and 8, and you will have a picture of a marvelously growing church considering the brief period of time that had elapsed, and the fact that Paul ministered to them at the beginning but three weeks.

How are we to account for this? Read verse 5 for the explanation. There we see that the Holy Ghost had accompanied Paul's preaching with great power, but a still more interesting question suggests itself. Why had the power of the Holy Ghost been displayed there in such measure? The last half of the verse sets that point clear, since it tells us that it was because of "the manner of men" Paul and his associates had been. Here then is the revelation of

A Wonderful Secret.

nothing less, indeed, than what all true Christians desire to know, viz: How to obtain power for service from the human side. Happily, Paul has told us what manner of man he was at Thessalonica, and left his portrait for us in chapter 2. Before considering that, however, let us look at one or two points of contact between this chapter and the record of the church, Acts 17. In the last-named chapter (verse 5), there is an intimation as we saw in our last lesson, that the church may have been composed chiefly of Gen-

tiles, and in verse 7, that a special theme of Paul's preaching may have been the coming manifested kingdom of Jesus. In the light of these intimations consider verses 9 and 10 of chapter 1 of our lesson. What evidence is found in verse 9, that he was addressing Gentiles chiefly? What in verse 10 that he had led them to look for the second coming of Christ? This last observation affords the opportunity to say that the second coming of Christ may be considered as the central teaching of these two epistles to the Thessalonians. It is almost the keynote of each. In the present epistle it is found in one way or another in every chapter, as we shall see before the conclusion of our study.

We are now ready to examine the second chapter, which contains

The Portrait of Paul, 2.

Here we have material for an excellent and practical Bible-reading on the theme suggested above. If we ask what manner of man Paul was, we find he was:—

1. Brave and devoted, 1-2.
2. Faithful and impartial, 3-6.
3. Kind and affectionate, 7, 8.
4. Unselfish and disinterested, 9.
5. Holy and consistent, 10.

Is it any wonder that the word was preached in power from the lips of such an ambassador, and that he could sum up this characterization of himself in the words of verse 13?

Notice how this chapter closes with a very earnest and practical allusion to our Lord's second coming as does the first, (17-20). For example, what had Paul desired (17)? Why had he not been able to gratify that desire (18)? Can you, from your knowledge of Paul's history about this time, form any conception of how Satan may have hindered him? How does he express his affection for the believers at Thessalonica (19)? When does he expect that he shall experience the fulness of joy in their redemption, and wear his crown of rejoicing on their behalf (19)? The reply to this query indicates that the great stimulus to Christian service ought to be the hope and expectation of the Lord's coming, just as the close of the first chapter shows that one of the motives entering into the acceptance of salvation is the same blessed hope.

The Origin of the Epistle, 3.

Being hindered from visiting them in person, what was the next best thing that Paul did, (3:1-5)? What particular commission did Timothy have, (same verses)? What was the character of his report to Paul, (6)? What effect did it produce on the apostle (7-10)? With what benediction does this allusion to his love for them conclude (11-13)? Observe the third reference to the second coming in the last verse. In the other instances it was associated with salvation and service, here with their full and complete sanctification. According to Acts 18, at what place was it that Timothy presented this report to Paul, and whence this epistle was presumably written?

Sins Rebuked, 4.

Though the church had so much to commend, yet it had something also to condemn. The first of the sins referred to may be classed under the category of sins of the flesh, (4:1-8). But immediately the question arises as to how Christians could possibly be guilty of such things as are here alluded to, and especially such good Christians as these seem to be according to the foregoing. The answer is approximated when we remember the fact already brought out that these were for the most part Gentile and not Jewish Christians. The latter had had the advantage of centuries of training in these matters under the Mosaic law, and were not as a class guilty of such offences. But the Gentiles in their self-imposed heathen darkness were lost to any consciousness of the enormity of such proceedings. Indeed licentiousness was, and still is, part of the religious worship of heathendom. We can understand, therefore, how slow they would be to perceive the sinfulness of fornication and related conduct even after becoming Christians, and what plainness as well as patience of speech must be required to bring them to a realizing sense of it. There is evidence, however, in the second epistle, that they profited by the present exhortations of the apostle, for no further allusion is made to the circumstance.

A second sin rebuked was that of idleness, (9-12). Just how to explain the existence of this vice in the face of Paul's own example to the contrary (2:9) is difficult. The view of Conybeare & Howson is that some "had given themselves up to a religious excitement under the influence of which they persuaded themselves that they need not continue to work at their callings, but might claim support of the richer members of the church." Others think the strong expectation of the near approach of Christ had much to do with it. At all events it is of practical interest to us to note that according to the context, idleness and busy-bodyness, for they are joined together in verse 11, are a transgression of brotherly love (9, 10); and furthermore that the two plain reasons why these Christians should work were that they might pay their debts, and not become mendicants (12). These things also when they can be avoided are violations of the second table of the law.

We now approach the most important doctrinal statement in the epistle, and that, doubtless, which gave the chief reason for its production, viz: the revelation of

The Dead and Living Saints

at Christ's coming (4:13-18). We have seen that Paul laid stress on the glory to be then revealed, and doubtless in consequence, quickened in the minds of the young converts an earnest expectation of the near approach of that day. In the meantime, after his departure from Thessalonica some of their number had died, and the bereaved sorrowed immoderately over the circumstance, supposing that the departed had forever lost the joy and happiness of the manifested kingdom. To correct this feeling and set the truth before them, Paul, first of all, exhorts them against that kind of heathenish mourning (13). He next tells them the wonderful news that we have the same ground for believing that the dead saints will come with Jesus when He comes that we have for believing in His own resurrection (14). In the third place, he says that the saints who will be alive in the flesh on the earth when Jesus comes, will have no advantage in the matter of time even, over those who will have died, for the latter will be raised (i. e., their bodies), from the dead first, (15, 16). In the fourth place, he adds that the living and dead saints, (the first changed, no doubt, and both now alive in their glorified bodies), will be "caught up" together "in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air," and to be forever with Him (17). And this is the way in which he would comfort them in their bereavement, and have them comfort one another. For passages corroborative of these statements, look at Zechariah 14:5, 1 Corinthians 15:51, Philippians 3:20, 21.

But how does the apostle guard against

A Current Folly

in regard to fixing dates for the appearing of our Lord, (5:1)? To what class of persons will His coming be a surprise (2, 3)? Who are meant by "they" in verse 3, the righteous or the wicked, the believing or the unbelieving? To whom will that event not be a surprise (4, 5)? What exhortation, however, grows out of this latter fact (6-8)?

There is nothing further in this epistle calling for particular attention so far as the present lesson is concerned. The apostle follows his practical exhortation and advice (12-22), with a gracious benediction (23), and a command touching the reading of the epistle in the church (27).

The following outline may help to recall the general contents of the epistle:

1. The spiritual condition of the church, 1.
2. The character of Paul, 2.
3. The origin of the epistle, 3.
4. The sins rebuked, 4:1-12.
5. The error corrected, 4:13-5:11.
6. The concluding exhortations, 5:12-28.

The Second Epistle.

The second epistle is believed to have been written shortly after the first, the reason for which is stated in the second chapter. Before considering it, however, there are one or two things in the first chapter that will repay attention. In the first place, as to the inner spiritual condition of the church at this date, was it as good, better, or worse than before (3, 4)? As to the outer physical condition, was it one of quietness and security, or persecution and trial (4-6)? It is in connection with the judgment predicted as coming on these persecutors that the inspired apostle alludes to another feature of Christ's second coming not mentioned before (7-10). In the first epistle Christ is represented as coming with His saints, but here as coming with His mighty angels. There He comes in blessing on His people, here in flaming fire taking vengeance, exercising judgment on His enemies. Are these two declarations contradictory to each other? The inquiry affords opportunity to say that the Lord's coming is evidently to be viewed under different aspects, or, if you please, as

An Act of Several Scenes.

One scene is depicted in the first epistle when He comes with and for His saints, and another in this where He comes with His angels for judgment. Some time may intervene between the two like the falling of the curtain in the performance of a drama, and yet both scenes are part of one act and to be classified as such. "The Day of the Lord" so often referred to in the Old Testament, may be a long period, just as the present "day of salvation," (2 Corinthians 6:2), has already covered over 1800 years, and many events may transpire in it.

The Man of Sin.

Coming to the immediate cause for the epistle we find (chapter 2:1, 2), that in the absence of Paul false teachers had found their way into the flock, leading them astray on the subject of the Lord's return. They had taught that He had already come. See the rendering of verse 2 in the Revised Version. It is noticeable that they even had resort to forgery and circulated a spurious letter as from Paul himself.

How does the apostle meet this false teaching? What does he say must precede the Lord's coming (3)? Who does he say shall be revealed as the outcome of this apostasy in the church? How is the "Man of sin" described? What denotes his great blasphemy (4)? In what book of the Old Testament do we meet with a like description? With whom, therefore, may we identify this "man of sin?" Why was not this apostasy fully consummated in Paul's own day (6, 7)? Just what this power was which was holding the development of the apostasy in check is not stated, though many believe the reference is to the Holy Spirit resident in the church. When the church

is "caught up to meet the Lord in the air" the Holy Spirit will depart with it from the earth, and then, it is supposed, the rapid culmination of iniquity will take place described further in verses 8-10. What judicial punishment will then fall on the unbelieving (11, 12)?

The Token of Valadity.

The closing chapter like that of the first epistle, consists mainly of practical exhortations and good wishes, but there are two things of special mention. In the first place, it will be observed that the same party in the church "continued fanatically to neglect their ordinary employments" (6-14). In the second place, Paul guards against forgery hereafter by telling them to look for his own signature to every epistle as a token of validity (17). An amanuensis might write the letter for him, but he would personally sign it.

THE NEXT LESSON IS GALATIANS.

REVIEW of the last lesson:

1. What chapter of the Acts contains the history of the founding of the church at Thessalonica?

2. From what place probably, was the first epistle written?

3. What is its doctrinal key-note?

4. Can you give the analyzation of Paul's character in chapter 2?

5. What two sins are rebuked in chapter 4?

6. State the relation of the dead and living saints at Christ's coming as outlined in chapter 4.

7. How would you harmonize the teachings about the second coming in 2 Thessalonians 1 with those in 1 Thessalonians 4?

8. What necessitated the second epistle?

9. Give the history of the apostacy as sketched in chapter 2.

10. What token of validity is to be looked for in every Pauline epistle hereafter?

The New Lesson.

Your reading of the Acts showed you that Paul visited the province of Galatia in Asia Minor twice, on his second and third journeys, but no mention was made of any particular city or town at which he stopped on either occasion. Acts 16:6, 18:23. It was on the third journey, and probably during his long stay at Ephesus, that this epistle was written, the evidence for which supposition is found in Conybeare & Howson's Life & Epistles of Paul, and in the introduction to any good commentary on the book. The occasion for writing it carries us back in our thought to the fifteenth chapter of Acts and the story of the first church council held at that time. The Judaizing teachers there referred to tracked Paul's footsteps everywhere, seeking to circumvent the preaching of a free Gospel and teaching the need of circumcision and other observances of the Mosaic law in order to salvation. They had good soil to work on in Galatia, for the people seem to have been of a demonstrative and fickle mind. (1:6, 4:9, 4:15, 16, 5:15). That this was the condition of things in the church, and that many had already fallen into the snare of seeking to supplement faith by works is further evident from 1:6-9, 3:3, 4:9-11, 5:3, etc., to which passages you are asked to give particular attention. The object of the epistle, therefore, is to restore these people to the faith, and in the working out of that object the epistle becomes an inspired classic on that fundamental doctrine of Christianity called

Justification by Faith.

It would seem that the false teachers referred to, in order to undermine the confidence of the people in the Gospel itself, must first accomplish the same purpose, with reference to the apostolic authority of Paul. They must first destroy his authority with the people as an inspired apostle before they could weaken the foundations of the Gospel as preached. This they sought diligently to do using Peter as a sort of comparison and contrast. The last-named preached no different Gospel from Paul, but being the apostle to the circumcision, i. e., the Jews, (Galatians 2:6-9), presented it from the Jewish standpoint, while Paul as the apostle to the uncircumcision did the same from the Gentile standpoint. We can readily see how there may have been some differences in the mode of presentation which gave an opportunity to these unsanctified Jewish Christians to denounce Paul as unorthodox. They had an advantage also in the fact that Paul was not one of the original twelve.

The Plan of the Epistle

grows out of this peculiar condition of things, and lends itself to a three-fold division. Chapters 1 and 2 are of a personal character in which Paul defends his apostolic authority; chapters 3 and 4 are doctrinal, in which he defends the Gospel or the doctrine of justification by faith; while chapters 5 and 6 are practical in their nature and contain the application of the doctrine to the daily life of the individual Christian.

Paul Defends His Apostolic Authority, 1-2,

on the ground of

1. His Divine call, 1:1.
2. His Divine revelation of the Gospel, 1:11, 12.
3. His independence of the other apostles, 1:15-24.
4. His endorsement by the church, 2:1-10.
5. His rebuke of Peter, 2:11-14.

Speaking of his Divine call, there are those who would say that his reference to man-made apostles has an application to the choice of Matthias by Peter and the others, alluded to in Acts 1. In like manner, his reference to the way in which he received the revelation of the Gospel recalls the circumstances of his conversion in Acts 9, as well as the experience referred to in verses 17 and 18 of this chapter of our lesson. In the section treating of his endorsement by the church there is an allusion, (chapter 2:1, 2), to the journey and its results spoken of in Acts 15 at the time of the first general council of the church to settle the question of justification. Particular attention should be called to his bold and consistent attitude with reference to the circumcision of Titus (3-5), an earlier allusion to which was made in our second lesson in the Acts. It is noticeable, too, that Paul makes as much of his final endorsement by the church as of his independence of the leaders of the church prior thereto. He would give his adversaries no advantage over him, as if they should say he

were too independent and could not be acknowledged by them until he had received the acknowledgement of the accepted authorities. His rebuke of Peter shows him to have been naturally the stronger character of the two, and in consideration of the fact that Peter was doubtless being quoted by his opponents, proves an adroit as well as convincing argument for his own authority.

Paul Defends the Gospel, 3-4.

Having established his authority as an apostle, the way is now clear to defend the Gospel he preached, and this he does on the following grounds:

1. Their own experience of its effects, 3:1-5.
2. The history of Abraham, 6-9.
3. The teachings of Scripture, 10-12.
4. The work of Christ, 13-14.

The first might be called the "argumentum ad hominem." It was evident to these Galatian Christians that they had received the Holy Spirit into their lives as the fruit thereof was seen and known. But how had they come to receive Him, through observing the Mosaic ceremonials or through the simple preaching of the Gospel? The answer, of course, was foreseen. It was as the result of Paul's preaching among them, and not the observance of circumcision or anything else. Why then did they need to supplement the work of the Spirit by that of the flesh?

The second argument is well adapted to refute the Judaizing teachers, since Abraham was the founder of their faith. And yet Abraham clearly was justified by believing on God and before he was circumcized.

The argument from the teachings of Scripture requires no explanation, since the passages quoted plainly state that if one elects to be saved by the law and not by grace, he can only be so saved by keeping the whole of it. Circumcision nor ceremonialism of any kind were not enough.

The work of Christ did away with all these things which only foreshadowed Him. He hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, why then dishonor His work and put ourselves voluntarily under that curse a second time? The whole argument is very clear and convincing, and furnishes us with a sermon outline on the doctrine of justification by faith made ready to hand.

But at this point the apostle supplements his argument by a brief disquisition on

The Relatioa of the Law to the Promise.

He anticipates a possible objection to his argument. It were as though some one should say: Granted that God saved Abraham or accounted him righteous on the ground of his belief in His promise; but is it not true that 430 years after that promise to Abraham He gave the law to Moses? And was not this law thus given to Moses intended to take the place of that promise as a ground of human righteousness? Paul answers, No. (Verses 15-18). His imaginary interlocutor then inquires, Why was the law given? What purpose does it serve? Paul's reply to this question discloses two points:—(1), the law was given because of transgressions, etc., verse 19. As the transgressions of men multiplied and became aggravated, God was obliged to come to His people in an entirely new way, in a more distant relation than existed in the time of the patriarchs. "The law was given, not so much in order to prevent transgressions, as to bring men under a more strict accountability for them, and a more plainly expressed curse." This brings us to the second point, (2), the law was our schoolmaster to bring us to Christ, verse 24. The Greek word for schoolmaster here means a faithful slave entrusted with the care of a boy from his tender years till puberty to keep him from physical and moral evil, and accompany him to his studies and amusements. He approached his charge with commands and prohibitions, and in a sense with limitations of his freedom. All this as a means to an end, viz: that the boy might be trained for mature age and the assumption of that higher grade of life for which he was destined. (Lange's Commentary). Thus the law leads men to Christ. It restrains and rebukes us, it shows us our sin and danger, it condemns us, and thus makes us feel the need of a Redeemer and prepares us to receive Him when presented to our faith. Compare Romans 10:4.

Paul continues this general subject amplifying and enlarging upon it throughout chapter four, climaxing the whole matter at last in the use of the allegory of Sarah and Hagar, (21-31). This is not to say that the story of Sarah and Hagar was not a historical fact as given in Genesis, but only that the apostle here uses the fact in an accommodated or allegorical sense for purposes of illustration. The design seems to be to show the effect of being under the bondage of the Jewish law as compared with the liberty of the Gospel. Hagar and her son were treated with severity, cast out and persecuted, and became a fit representation of Jerusalem as it was in the time of Paul. Sarah and Isaac enjoyed freedom and sonship, and became correspondingly a fit representation of the New Jerusalem or the true kingdom of God. Which would these Galatian Christians choose, to remain under the freedom of the Gospel, or voluntarily put themselves into the bondage and under the yoke of Judaism?

Paul Applies the Doctrine, 5-6.

In applying the doctrine Paul simply urges them to stand fast in the liberty of

Christ, (5:1-12), but in doing so to be careful not to abuse that liberty, (5:13-6:10). He mentions at least four ways in which their Christian liberty may thus be abused, and earnestly warns them against

1. Uncharitableness, 13-15.
2. Uncleanness, 16-25.
3. Pride, 26-6:5.
4. Selfishness, 6-10.

The first-mentioned warning or exhortation speaks for itself. They were to give over contending on this matter and everything else, and seek to live in peace.

The second is very important as showing that sins of the mind (20), as well as of the body (19, 21), are to be classified as of the flesh; that the practice of such sins eternally disinherits (21), and that the Holy Spirit is given to believers for the very purpose of overcoming them (17). Read this last verse in the Revised Version and see the different construction put upon it by the word "may" instead of "can" in the last phrase.

The "pride" referred to in the third instance will be found to be spiritual pride; in which connection it will be profitable to note the implied contrast between verses 2 and 5 of chapter 5. The Greek word for "burden" is not the same in both cases and the statements are not contradictory. A commentary will tell you that in the first instance Paul tells them to bear with others' "burdens" of infirmity in sympathy; and in the second, that self-examination will make them feel they have enough to do with their own "load" of sin without comparing themselves boastfully with their neighbors.

What in the fourth place I have called selfishness, might be equally well described as parsimony. Verse 6 seems to refer to the care they should evince for their spiritual teachers in their temporal concerns; and the reference to "sowing and reaping" in the following verses so generally employed by us in its widest application, primarily alludes to the same thing.

In closing the lesson let me call your attention to verse 11 for its bearing on what we were taught in 2 Thessalonians 3:17.

As an outline has been given with each division of this lesson, none seems to be required at the close. The preceding outlines put together will make one sufficiently concise as well as comprehensive.

The Next Lesson

will be the epistle to the Romans. It is so chosen because many think it was written at about the same time as Galatians. There is a close similarity of theme between the two, and one seems to be the complement of the other. In preparing for this coming lesson I would suggest that you read chapters 1-8 inclusive, and then pass over to chapter 12 reading continuously to the end. The intervening chapters, 9-11 inclusive, while of deep interest and importance, are in a sense parenthetical, and will be treated separately. It will add to the clearness and satisfaction of the lesson if these chapters be read by themselves.

REVIEW of the last lesson:

1. What occasioned the epistle to the Galatians?

2. How would you describe the character of that people?

3. In what particular had they fallen from grace?

4. What, then, is the theme of the epistle?

5. What was the mode of proceedure of the false teachers?

6. What is the general plan of the epistle?

7. Give Paul's argument for his apostolic authority.

8. Give his argument for justification by faith.

9. For what purposes was the law given subsequent to the promise?

10. How does the law lead men to Christ?

11. In what ways may Christian liberty be abused?

12. How does the Revised Version render 5:17?

13. How would you harmonize verses 2 and 5 of chapter 6?

The New Lesson

It was stated in the last lesson that Romans, presumably, was written soon after Galatians. It would appear that Paul had a desire to further enlarge on the important subject considered in that epistle, and availed himself of an opportunity which now offered to do so in addressing the Christians of the metropolis of Rome. Phoebe, a deaconness of the church at Cenchrea, was about to visit that city on private business, (16:1), and her going would be availed of to write them a letter in which he could pursue the subject to a greater extent and from another point of view.

Galatians had presented the doctrine of justification by faith from the human side, but Romans should treat of it from the Divine side. Humanly speaking, man is justified by believing on the Lord Jesus Christ, but that which God does to the man thus believing which justifies him, is to give him His own righteousness. And this is really the theme of the epistle to the Romans, viz:

The Gift of the Divine Righteousness.

Before taking up the epistle synthetically let me call your attention to the number of times in which the phrase "the righteousness of God," or its equivalent, is found in it. It is indeed a keyword. See 1:17, 3:5, 21, 22, 5:17, 10:3, and other places. To understand its meaning is of the first importance not only to master the epistle, but to enjoy the peace of God in one's heart. It means "the rightness which proceeds from God, i. e., the right relation in which man is placed by a judicial act of God." (Meyer). Wonderful thought that! It permits us to render verse 17 of chapter 1 in this way: "He that is righteous by faith shall live!" All others shall die eternally except those who, having exercised faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, have received "the righteousness of God," have been placed in a right relation to Him by His own judicial act. O, grace unspeakable! How simple, yet how complete salvation is!

There is also one other word frequently used in this epistle as elsewhere which we should clearly understand—the word justified. 2:13, 3:20, 24, 28, 5:1, 9, 8:30, etc. It does not mean, of course, tnat man is by faith justified or made righteous in his personal character, but that he is declared righteous in point of law. (Chalmers). The righteousness of his personal character is something that follows after, which the theologians call

Sanctification,

but the legal righteousness is something which becomes his once and forever, the moment he accepts Jesus Christ!

Now to the epistle. The introduction covers verses 1-15 of the first chapter, and consists principally of two parts, the salutation proper, 1-7, and the expression of Paul's wish to visit the church, 8-15. It is evident that he had not visited Rome prior to this time, and the assumption is that no other apostle had done so. The reference to the spiritual gifts, verse 11, is doubtless of those commonly imparted at this time by the apostolic laying on of hands. See Acts 8:14-17, 19:6. Had any apostle preceded Paul to Rome these gifts would doubtless have been imparted. The reference to Paul's desire for spiritual fruit is also to the point, (verse 13). It seems to have been a principle with him not to build on another's foundation (2 Corinthians 10:14-16), and, therefore, had any other apostle visited Rome he would not have followed him. All this has a bearing on the contention of Roman Catholicism that Peter was the first bishop of Rome. To destroy this fiction is to undermine the most important stone in the foundation of the papacy, and these utterances of Paul deal it some heavy blows. Any who desire to peruse a very convincing demonstration of the papal fallacy in this regard had better obtain a small book by Rev. Mason Gallagher, D. D., entitled,

"Was Peter Ever at Rome?"

containing an introduction by the late Rev. John Hall, D. D., and procurable, doubtless, of the publishers, Eaton & Mains, 150 Fifth Ave., N. Y.

It is at verses 16 and 17 of the first chapter that we reach the theme of the epistle, viz: "The Gift of the Divine Righteousness." Paul is ready to preach at the imperial capitol, for he is not ashamed of the Gospel. And he is not ashamed because it is the power of God unto salvation. But wherein does its power lie? In this, that therein is re-

vealed to faith the great fact of the righteousness of God which is given to man, so that he who receives this righteousness shall live.

After the statement of the theme the continuation of the epistle is its elaboration. We are shown:—

1. The necessity of this gift of righteousness, 1:18-3:20.
2. The method of its application, 3:21-4:25.
3. The effect of it upon its recipient, 5-8, 12-14.

The third division is subdivided again into three parts, as follows:

a. The effect upon man in his relations to God, 5:1-11.

b. The effect upon man in his own experience, 6-8.

c. The effect upon man in his relation to his fellowman, 12-15.

I. The necessity of this gift is shown in the fact that man has no righteousness of his own (1:18). This fact is proven by the history of the heathen world (19-32). Moreover it is shown to be universally true (2:1-16). And not only is it universally true of the Gentiles, but the indictment also includes the Jews (17-29). This is proven against the latter not merely by the facts of history as in the case of the Gentiles, but also by the teachings of their own law (the Old Testament Scriptures), (3:9-20).

The above is, in outline, Paul's argument to prove the first point in his discourse, viz: the necessity of the gift of God's righteousness so far as man is concerned. In studying it observe two or three things very especially. In the first place, observe the just responsibility of the heathen world for the condition in which it is found (1:19, 20). In the second place, observe that no individual is exempt. While Paul's declaration (2:1) does not necessarily say that all men are guilty of all the sins enumerated in the black catalogue above, it says nevertheless that all men are guilty of some of them, and this, according to James 2:10, makes them in a sense guilty of all. In the third place, observe the particular pains taken to convict the Jews of their need of this gift. The Gentiles had nothing to plead, but the Jews were self-righteous, trusting in their possession of the sacred oracles, their many religious privileges, their outward keeping of the law and knowledge of God. Yet they too were guilty. Facts proved it (2:24). Moreover their sacred oracles asserted it if they only read them right, (3:10). Hence the conclusion of 3:19, 20, not only included them, but as the last verse shows, was especially aimed at them.

The Method of its Application.

II. The second part of our theme is easily understood (3:21-4:25). The righteousness which God gives to men is "without the law," i. e., independent of its keeping or observance on man's part (21), and becomes his through the exercise of faith in Christ (22). Especially, be it observed, faith in Christ as a propitiation by His blood (25).

The orthodox Jew might object that this was a new doctrine of righteousness, and hence not to be received, but Paul offsets this possible objection by the remark that it is witnessed to "by the law and the prophets," (21, last clause). In other words, he tells them it is an Old Testament doctrine. The "law" was the name usually given to the first five books of Moses, and the "prophets" stood for all the rest of the Old Testament. Hence both its great divisions had illustrations and examples of righteousness received by faith. Did the objector challenge their production? If so, the next chapter furnishes them—Abraham's history is taken from the law (4:1-5), and David's from the prophets (6-8). Notice that after the reference to David's teaching the apostle returns to the history of Abraham, enlarges upon it, and puts the way of salvation before his readers so plainly and simply (verses 23-25), that even a young child can make no mistake about it.

The Effect Upon its Recipient.

III. The third main division of our theme is longer and more involved than the others, and yet I hope some light may be thrown upon it. It covers, as has been stated, chapters 5-8, and 12-16. The first question answered is, what is the effect of this gift of the Divine righteousness upon man in his relation to God? The answer really covers the whole of chapter 5, but our attention will be concentrated on the first eleven verses, which teach that the justified man in his relation to God is now in a state of grace as contrasted with his previous state of wrath. And this state of grace is expressed in three particulars:

Peace, 1.
Access, 2.
Joy, 3-11.

The joy is sub-divided again so that it finds its source in

The hope of glory, 2.
Tribulations, 3-5.
God Himself, 11.

Into this state of grace or standing before God is the man immediately brought who is made righteous by faith.

But the next question to be answered touches his personal experience. How does this gift of the Divine righteousness affect the man himself in his own inner life? The answer in chapters 6-8 is that it brings him into a state of holiness as contrasted with his previous state of sin. This state of holiness is set before us in the following gradation of thought. The justified man finds himself:—

1. In a new sphere, 6.
2. In a new condition, 7.
3. In a new possession, 8.

He is in a new sphere, i. e., a new plan of existence or range of action, in the

sense that he is now "dead to sin and alive to God," (6:2-11). He may have no feeling, no consciousness of this in his being, but he is to "reckon," account it to be so nevertheless, on God's own authority (verse 11). Moreover on the basis of this assured fact he is no longer to let sin reign in his flesh nor yield himself to it (12-14). It may still be in his flesh, but not necessarily as a king reigning, but as a slave chained. The obligation in verse 12, and the promise in verse 14, make this certain.

Moreover he is not only in this new sphere, but in a new condition, in the sense that now a warfare is going on within him between holiness and sin, between his new nature and the old, between the law in his mind and that in his members (7:15-23). How will this warfare terminate? Which will conquer, the old nature or the new? Does he become discouraged and utter the despairing exclamation of verse 24? If so, the answer is ready: "I thank God," says Paul, "there is deliverance and victory through Jesus Christ our Lord." But how, or when?

This brings us to the third thought, viz: that the man is not only in a new condition, but in the possession of a new power by which to overcome sin and gain the victory. This power is none other than the indwelling Spirit of God. Paul here takes a leaf from his own experience. He himself may have been in the condition expressed in chapter 7, but he got delivered out of it. "The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus," he says, "hath made me free from the law of sin and death" (8:2). "What this law or operation of the Holy Spirit did in my life it can do in yours." What does it do? At least four things are mentioned. The Holy Spirit within the justified man,

quickens, 11,
leads, 14,
witnesses, 16,
intercedes, 26.

No wonder that after such a demonstration of spiritual truth, the apostle is moved to climax this part of his argument with the triumphant challenges and declarations of faith of the verses that follow (31-39).

But the theme is not yet exhausted. It were not enough to say what were the effect of this gift on man in his relations to God and in his own experience, if the apostle were to omit that other large part of his environment, viz: his relations to his fellowmen. How does it affect him there? The answer is that, as in the first instance, it brings him into a state of grace, and in the second, into a state of holiness, so here it brings him into a state of love in contrast to his previous state of selfishness. This is ennunciated in chapters 12-16, or rather 12-15, because the last chapter of this epistle is really words of greeting to different individuals in Rome. It may seem unwarranted thus to "skip" from chapter 8 to 12, but if you have carefully read the chapters as indicated you must have perceived a close connection between the two. The word "therefore" at the beginning of chapter 12 introduces a conclusion based upon all the doctrinal instruction of the first eight chapters. This is not to say that it is not also based upon the facts of the intervening chapters, but these it will be found are an "aside" to the main line of argument.

How, then, is this state of love expressed in the chapters under consideration? In three ways at least:

1. Humility and practical kindness, 12.
2. Submission to authority, 13.
3. Forbearance and consideration, 14-15.

We have thus pursued to the end what may be described as the "main trunk line" of the epistle, and will now return a little and look at the contributive or parenthetic section of chapters 9-11, which considers

The Relation of Israel (as a Nation) to the Gospel

These chapters may be explained thus:—

If the Jews were under condemnation as well as the Gentiles, as Paul had proved, the former might well ask of what advantage it was to be a Jew? Had not God given certain promises to them in the Old Testament? Had these promises failed? The apostle's answer is three-fold:—

I. They had not failed, because part of Israel—an elect number, had already been saved under the Gospel (9:6-24). This preserved the truth of the promise (6). Moreover, there was a precedent for such selection in the Divine dealings with Abraham and his seed (7-9), and Jacob and Esau (10-13). God had a sovereign right thus to act (14-18), if in that way He might best manifest His glory (22-29).

II. All of Israel might be saved if they so chose, i. e., if they would seek salvation by faith, (9:30-10:21). Thus did the Gentiles obtain it (30), though the Jews had stumbled at it (9:31-10:4). All this had been foretold in their Old Testament Scriptures (10:18-21).

III. All of Israel shall be saved, i. e., in the coming time, the whole nation then living upon the earth will be turned to the Lord, and every promise completely and eternally fulfilled (11:1-36). It is true that an election is already saved (1-7); but the rejection of some is in the meantime resulting in blessing (salvation) to the Gentiles (11). The ultimate conversion of the Jews will result in greater blessing to the Gentiles, i. e., to the whole world (12-15). That ultimate conversion is assured (25-29).

It will be seen by the above that there is a perfect harmony and consistency between the prophets of the Old Testament and the apostles of the New as to the future of Jewish history, and the certain and literal fulfillment of the promises to Israel.

There are many of

"The Deep Things of God"

in these and the preceding chapters which it is not within the province of these studies even to attempt to explain. If we have gotten hold of the main line of argument, the central outline facts, we have done well.

THE NEXT LESSON IS 1 CORINTHIANS.

REVIEW of the last lesson:

1. Of what other epistle may Romans be called the complement?
2. Who, presumably, was its messenger?
3. How would you contrast the two epistles Galatians and Romans?
4. What is the theme of Romans?
5. What does "the righteousness of God" as used in this epistle, mean?
6. What does the word "justified" stand for?
7. What argument could you present that no apostle up to this time had visited Rome?
8. Give the main line of argument, (the three principal divisions), of chapters 1-8, 12-15.
9. How is the third division subdivided?
10. Give the details of Paul's teaching under the first main division (1:18-3:20).
11. What illustrations and examples of righteousness by faith are found in the Old Testament?
12. What is the effect of this gift upon man in his relation to God?
13. How is that state expressed?
14. What is the effect of the gift upon man in his own experience?
15. How is this fact set before us in chapters 6-8?
16. What is meant by the "new sphere," "new condition," "new possession?"
17. How does the Holy Spirit bring about in us victory over sin?
18. What is the effect of this gift upon man in his relation to others?
19. What seems to be the theme of chapters 9-11?
20. Give the implied reason for these chapters.
21. Give Paul's three-fold answer to the implied inquiry of the Jews.

The New Lesson.

For the origin of the church at Corinth you are asked to review the eighteenth chapter of the Acts. It was on Paul's second missionary journey he first visited that great commercial metropolis of Greece, remaining at the time about a year and a half. He is now, however, on his third journey and has reached as far as Ephesus in Asia where he resides three years. Ephesus is just across the way from Corinth on the eastern shore of the Aegean sea, and the communication between the two places is as frequent as that now between New York and Liverpool. Under these circumstances the brethren at Corinth take advantage of Paul's proximity to send him certain messengers (1:11), with reports about the condition of the church there, and certain inquiries in writing (7:1), as to which they desired information. The contents of this epistle consist of references to these reports and replies to these inquiries And taken as a whole, the theme of the epistle might be expressed as a treatise on

The Outward Order and Government of the Church.

After the customary salutation (1:1-9), the apostle immediately enters upon the practical part of his work, treating in turn of the following subjects:—

1. Sectarianism, 1:10-4:21.
2. Impurity of conduct, 5-6.
3. Marriage, 7.
4. Christian liberty, 8-10.
5. Public worship, 11.
6. Spiritual gifts, 12-14.
7. Bodily resurrection, 15.

Sectarianism, 1:10-4:21.

Into how many parties had the church become divided (1:12)? How shall we explain this? I suppose it came about somewhat on this wise: Paul had first preached the Gospel there, and seems to have been followed by Apollos (Acts 19:1). But Apollos was quite a different type of man from Paul. He had different antecedents, different gifts, different training. He had come to Christ in quite a different way. See Acts 18:24-28. It is quite presumable, therefore, that while preaching the same Gospel at Corinth, he may have presented it from another aspect than Paul. The Corinthians were Greeks with the speculative, philosophizing turn of mind proverbial to that people. There may have been just enough of difference between Paul and Apollos in their personal make-up, and in their matter and manner of preaching to have started that Grecian tendency into action.

But the matter seems to have been complicated later by another element. Cephas (or Peter) apparently visited Corinth. Or, perhaps, to speak more correctly, some of those Judaizing teachers from Jerusalem with whom we have become acquainted, and who represented a sort of Petrine school of teaching in the early church, may have visited the city. If they began to preach the Gospel to the Greeks from the Jewish standpoint, and to make the same trouble in Corinth as they had at Galatia, we can readily understand how confusing the religious atmosphere became, and how prolific of debate, and reasoning, and division. They who said, "I am of Christ," were perhaps the most sectarian of all. They had withdrawn from all the other parties and set up their own. They had arrogated to themselves the Name Above Every Name and were the only ones who (in their own estimation) were right.

The Cause and Cure.

That we are not far wrong in the above diagnosis is clear when we consider what follows in this and the next chapter. Paul practically lays the whole responsibility upon those who had sought to apply the principles of their worldly-wisdom to the teachings of the Gospel. See how often in these chapters he employs the words

"wisdom," and "wise," and their correlatives and counterparts.

Of course we can not analyze the subject very closely, but two or three thoughts stand out clearly:—

1. Paul had not sought to preach the Gospel in his own natural wisdom, but in the power of the Holy Spirit, 1:17, 2:1-5.

2. Natural wisdom, i. e., the wisdom of this world, was in the sphere of religion, simply foolishness, 1:18-21.

3. It was not the worldly-wise, but the opposite who were being called into fellowship with God, 1:26-29.

4. Christ was in His own Person the wisdom of God, and this wisdom could not be received by the natural man, 1:22-24,30, 2:14-16.

5. It was a wisdom, moreover, which did not put contempt on the human intellect, but only subordinated it to the spiritual revelation of God, 2:6-13.

If the Corinthians had suitably considered these principles of the Gospel they would not have fallen into their sectarian folly. Passing from the consideration of the cause thereof the apostle now calls their attention to the cure, which was

A Right Estimate of Human Teachers.

He asks his readers to consider (1), the relation these teachers sustain to the Lord who employs them, (3:5-9); (2), the responsibility they have for their work, (10-15); and (3), the feeling with which the church should regard them, (16-23-4:5); concluding the instruction and rebuke with a paternal entreaty to follow him in his teaching and in his example of humiliation (6-16).

Impurity of Conduct, 5-6.

The particular act of sin mentioned here is more gross than anything spoken of in 1 Thessalonians, to the lesson on which epistle you are again referred for an explanation as to the possibility of such offences among Christians otherwise commended for their good character. What greatly magnified the iniquity in this instance (5:2)? What judgment does Paul decree upon this particular offender (3-5)? Wherein lay the peril to, and what was the obligation of the church in such a matter (6-8)? What indicates that Paul had written a previous letter to them of which we have no further record (9)? What distinction does he make with reference to evil companionship (9-11)? We must be careful to guard against a false application of this remark. Paul does not teach that Christians are at liberty to choose fornicators and such-like offenders against decency as their companions outside of the church. He merely says, in effect, that outside of the church, i. e., in the world, we can not avoid rubbing up against them very well. We are often obliged to do business with them when we can not help ourselves. But we are not obliged to keep them in the church, and we should not fellowship them there (13).

Christian Law Suits.

At the close of chapter 5, Paul had spoken about "judging" those within and without the church, and in the following chapter he enlarges on the theme somewhat. There are commentators who think he is here taking up a new subject altogether, but I agree with those who say otherwise. Before this chapter closes the writer again speaks of sins of the flesh and the proper use and appreciation of the human body, and I am led to believe, therefore, that he has not left the subject to immediately return to it again. It seems to me that verses 1-8 are really part of his instruction about this social offence. Perhaps some members of the church had gone to law about it, or about some result or consequence growing out of it. At all events it affords a fine opportunity for the inspired pen to lay down certain axioms to govern Christian believers always and everywhere about lawsuits and court litigation.

I need not dwell further on these verses as they so plainly speak for themselves. Let me call particular attention, however, to the Scriptural estimate of

The Human Body,

with which this chapter closes. There was a tenet of Grecian philosophy to the effect that "man is the measure of all things," all the creatures are his and all things are lawful to him. This view was supposed to countenance the gratification of a natural appetite such as that which these chapters are talking about, as being no less proper in itself than the eating of food (12, 13). The apostle shows, however, that there is a great difference between these two things. Meats are transient and so is the belly that receives them. A time is coming when man will not need physical nourishment, and when the organs for its reception will be dispensed with. "Fornication, however, is the perversion to illegitimate uses of the entire body—the body which belongs to the Lord, and is destined to an imperishable life." It is at this point that he branches out in a strain of loftiest eloquence to speak of the true character and destiny of the body as an argument for its holy and reverent use. For example:

1. It is for the Lord (His possession).
2. The Lord is for it (to rule, to use, to assimilate, and nourish).
3. It is to be raised from the dead.
4. It is a member of Christ.
5. It is a temple of the Holy Ghost.
6. It has been redeemed.
7. It should be consecrated to God's glory.

Christian Marriage, 7.

There seems to have been a party in the church which questioned the propriety of

marriage, regarding it as sinful perhaps, advising its avoidance, and seeking to break up the relationship even after it had been formed. Doubtless it was a reaction against the boundless licentiousness of the time. To this subject the apostle now gives his attention. He admits that the unwedded life is good (7:1), provided it can be sustained without sin; but because of the unlikelihood of this marriage is advised (2). In the latter case there should be the performance of the mutual duties it involves (3-5). He does not absolutely command marriage to every one, but simply says it is permissable (6-9).

Was Paul Inspired?

Verse 6, just referred to, has given much trouble to some in determining the question of the inspiration of the Bible. It looks at first as though Paul meant that he was not commanded or directed by the Holy Spirit to thus advise, but only permitted to do so if he pleased. But the construction indicated above removes the difficulty by showing that he is not referring to himself nor his authority at all, but to his hearers and the question of their marriage. It was this which was permitted to them, but not commanded.

This chapter contains two or three other difficulties of the same character, which I have dealt with in a simple and popular way in a book entitled "The Bulwarks of the Faith," which might be serviceable to the members of the class who do not posses larger treatises on the subject. It deals with the three important questions, the authenticity, truth and inspiration of the Bible, with questions for class use at the end of each chapter. The publishers price is seventy five cents, post paid, but any order sent directly to me at Boston would be filled.

The Question of Divorce.

Paul not only advises marriage but forbids divorce, i. e., on grounds of religious belief (10-24). In this he supplements what our Lord Himself had taught on the subject of divorce while He was here in the flesh (10-12). In doing this, be it observed, he is demonstrating the Authority by which he speaks, inasmuch as His own instruction (in the Holy Spirit) is placed on a level with that of Christ Himself.

Verse fourteen of this chapter presents some difficulty, but as Dr. Charles Hodge says in his commentary, "The most natural view is this:—the children of these mixed marriages were acknowledged as holy, i. e., as belonging to the church; hence the marriages themselves must be consistent with the laws of God." Paul does not recommend Christians to marry unbelievers, indeed elsewhere he earnestly contends against it (2 Corinthians 6:14-18); but he is only referring to those who have become Christians after marriage, and who should not, in consequence, seek divorce from the non-Christian partner. Let us make no mistake either about the Christian partner sanctifying the non-Christian one. This can not mean, of course, that the latter becomes subjectively holy by such a circumstance, but only that he participates in the consecration of the other to the extent that he is connected by this link at least to the church of God or to God's people.

Advice to the Unmarried.

It is the opinion of many eminent commentators that the word "virgin" used so frequently in this section of the chapter (25-40), refers to both sexes and is equivalent to our "single persons." This lightens up the passage a good deal. In interpreting it we should also bear in mind with Dean Alford that "the whole is written under the strong impression of the near approach of the end of the present state of things (29-31), and as advising the Corinthians under circumstances in which persecution, and family division for the Gospel's sake might at any time break up the relations of life." For these reasons, the same author adds, "The meaning of God's Spirit in such instruction with reference to the subsequent ages of the church, should be sought by careful comparison and inference, and not rashly assumed and misapplied."

We will close our present lesson at this point, and conclude the study of this epistle in the following one.

REVIEW of the last lesson:

1. On which missionary journey of Paul was the church at Corinth founded?

2. From whence, presumably, was this epistle written?

3. What was its occasion?

4. What is its general theme?

5. What three divisions of the book, by subjects, were treated in our last lesson?

6. How might we explain the party divisions in the church?

7. What cure for them is suggested?

8. What is the teaching of this epistle about Christian litigation?

9. What does it teach about the true character and destiny of the human body?

10. How would you explain the peculiar expression in chapter 7:6?

11. What does this epistle teach about divorce?

12. In what light are we to read the latter part of chapter 7?

The New Lesson.

When we read chapter 8 for the first time it seems, perhaps, as though there were nothing in it of practical value for us at the present time. What interest can we have in the matter of meat offered to idols? But the further we penetrate into its teachings the more are we impressed with both the depth and breadth of the principles of holy conduct it inculcates. The explanation of its contents is something like this:—These Corinthian Christians had for the most part been converted from heathenism where they had worshipped idols. In connection with this worship there had been feasts in the idols' temples, where portions of the animals offered in sacrifice were eaten by the worshippers. Now that these Corinthians had been converted to Christianity they engaged no more in such feasts on their own account, but were sometimes invited to attend them in a social way by their heathen neighbors. The question propounded to Paul was as to whether it were lawful to do this? There were those in the church who thought it was. They argued that there were no such things as idols, and hence no worship could be rendered them. That meat offered to them was no different from other meat, and might as well be eaten in their temples, so-called, as anywhere else. Their knowledge of this truth therefore, and their liberty as Christians gave them the right to accept such invitations if they chose.

Paul's Answer was Threefold.

He warns them against being puffed up by their knowledge (8:1-3), and admits that there is no such thing as an idol (4-6), but asks them to consider the duty they owe as Christians to their weaker brethren (7-12). This is the first part of his answer. He inforces this by his own example (8:13, 9:1-27). He does not ask them to do anything in the way of self-restraint on behalf of others that he does not do himself. In what three particulars had he denied himself (9:4-15)? What motives had governed him (12, 15, 16-27)?

This leads to the second part of his answer. They should deny themselves in such a case not only because of the peril to their weaker brother, but because of

The Peril to Their Own Souls.

This is his line of thought in chapter 10:1-15. He had just said, speaking of his own example (9:27), that he kept his body under restraint in these things lest after having preached to others he himself should be a castaway, i. e., no longer used of God in His service. And a like danger threatened them. By what Old Testament incident is this illustrated (10:1-6)? What warning and exhortation follow (7-15)?

We now reach the third part of his answer in which he dwells upon the incongruity of the act referred to in any case (16-22). What comparison is here drawn? How does he sum up this part of his subject (23, 24)? Might Christians purchase and eat this meat if it were offered for sale in the open market (25, 26)? Were they at liberty to eat it at a private meal in a neighbor's house (27)? Under what circumstances even there should they desist from eating it (28)? What principle should always govern them in the exercise of their Christian liberty (31-33)?

Public Worship. XI.

After speaking of the heathen worship the transition to Christian worship is natural and easy. There were two things to be corrected, the demeanor of women in the public assembly, and the conduct or administration of the Lord's Supper. What custom seems to have been violated by some of the women (5)? What reason is given why this custom should be observed (10)? Dr. Hodge, the noted commentator, says, "There is scarcely a passage in the New Testament which has so much taxed the learning and ingenuity of commentators as this." I think the holy

angels are meant, not evil spirits. These are regarded as being invisibly present with Christ in the assemblies of the church, whose displeasure would be awakened by a violation of decency. I am unable to say positively that this direction of Paul about the head covering of women in church is of universal and perpetual obligation upon them. It may have been peculiar to that time and place like the directions about the unwedded life in chapter 7; but in the absence of positive data on this subject would it not be well for us to give the Scripture in this instance the benefit of the doubt? After what the apostle has said about the subjection of the woman to the man, how does he guard against any tyrannical abuse of that power on man's part (11, 12)?

Speaking of the Lord's Supper, what abuses seem to have been connected with its administration (20-22)? These verses seem to show that this sacred ordinance was carried on something like an indoor picnic with eating and drinking to excess. The rich had brought with them to the meeting-place a great abundance, while the poor seem to have been left without anything to eat or drink. The whole thing seems hideous to us and grossly inconsistent with the Christian religion; but we must continually remember that these people had just come out of heathenism, where feasts of such a character, and much worse indeed, were a concomitant of their religious worship. How tenderly Paul deals with them as the representative of Christ! How does he explain the history and character of the ordinance (23-26)? What warning and exhortation are added (27-29)? The word "unworthily" in verse 27, has troubled many timid souls about partaking of

The Lord's Supper,

but the context explains the meaning. As Dr. Hodge says, "It is not the consciousness of unworthiness that makes a person unworthy, which indeed indicates a better state of mind than indifference or false security." The unworthiness consists in failing to keep in view the holy purport and aim of the solemnity itself. How does Paul describe the character of this profane eating of the Lord's Supper? In other words, of what does he say they fail who thus profane it? Read verse 29 in the Revised Version. What punishments or judgments of a physical nature were visited upon them for these things (30)? How might these judgments be prevented? How does God show His mercy in chastisement of His people for such sins (32)?

Spiritual Gifts, 12-14.

This section of the epistle has always seemed to me one of the most interesting and important. The spiritual gifts treated are those extraordinary bestowments of the Holy Spirit on some of the early Christians as evidences of faith and means of extending the work of the Gospel. But we need not suppose them to have been limited to the apostolic period. Many, if not all of them, have continued with the church in different centuries and are present in her life and history now. The apostle may be said to treat of them under the following divisions:

1. Their source. 12:1-6.
2. Their nature. 7-11.
3. Their equality. 12-31.
4. Their abuse. 12:31-14:1
5. Their choice. 14:1-25.
6. Their employment. 26-40.

Whence came these gifts (12:4-7)? How many distinct kinds of gifts are mentioned (8-10? What shows that the possession of these gifts had led to rivalry and unholy emulation (11-37)? How is such a spirit to be counteracted (chapter 13)? What grace of the Holy Spirit is thus proven to be more desirable than all His gifts? How is the word "charity" given in the Revised Version? This chapter furnishes a splendid outline for a sermon on

The Nature of Love.

We have (1), the superiority of love as shown in comparison with six distinct gifts (1-3); (2), the description of love of which ten marks are given (4-6); (3), the power of love (7); (4), the permanence of love (8-13).

Of all the different "gifts," which is to be the most desired (14:1)? What reasons are given for this (2-5)? It is evident that the gift of tongues was most coveted by the people, and perhaps those who possessed it were the chief instigators of the rivalry and unhappy schism. How does the apostle show its undesirableness in comparison with the others (6-20)? For what class of persons is the gift of tongues intended as a sign of the supernatural (22)? But what gift is needed for the conversion and edification of such (23-25)? What description of a primitive

Prayer and Conference Meeting

is found in verse 26? What directions are given for its conduct (27-33)? How

does this indicate that confusion and disorder may have reigned theretofore? Compare carefully verses 34, 35 with chapter 11:5, 13, and ask yourselves whether in these instructions about women taking part in meetings there is any contradiction? Is it likely that an inspired writing such as this epistle could contain a contradiction? May we not infer from 11:5, 13, that women were at liberty to pray and prophesy (i. e., exhort, preach) in public assemblies of the church? Must it not then be some other kind of speaking in such assemblies which they are denied in the present chapter?

I am really unable to throw any light upon the subject. I only know that in our day the Holy Ghost seems to be fallen on women as well as men, and that they are greatly used in public praying, teaching and speaking. Personally I draw a line at the pastorate, for reasons which I cannot here enumerate, but otherwise I feel that I must thank God for the ministry of women in the churches. I am seeking light, and will be ready to acknowledge my error when it appears; but in the meantime, while not assuming for a moment to question the authority of Paul any more than I would that of the Holy Spirit Himself, I must interpret this word in the way in which providence seems to be interpreting it in our time.

The Resurrection of the Body, 15.

Speaking of the style of this epistle, Alford says it ranks perhaps as the foremost of all as to sublimity and earnest and impassioned eloquence. But there is no part of it which illustrates that more forcibly than the chapter now under consideration. "The doctrine of the resurrection of the body was repudiated by some at Corinth, and it therefore became necessary to thoroughly expound it as to its grounds, analogies and necessity. And thus we obtain one of the grandest and most precious portions of the apostolic writings. For record of the appearances of the Lord after His resurrection—for cogent argument binding His resurrection to ours—for assertion and implication of the great doctrine of His inclusive humanity,—for revelation of holy mysteries imparted by special inspiration,—for triumphant application of the phenomena and analogies of nature,—no extant writing can compare with this chapter in its value to the church—its power of convincing the mind and awakening Christian hope —its far-seeing confutation of the cavils and scoffs of all after ages against the doctrine of the Resurrection."

The chapter may be divided thus: we have (1), the fact of the resurrection of Christ stated, and proven true by the testimony of eye-witnesses (1-11); (2), The deduction that because He rose we also shall rise (12-22); (3), The order in which the resurrection shall take place (23-28); it will be in these divisions: Christ first; then they that are His at His coming, (compare Thessalonians, 4:13-18); then all the rest of the dead at the end (compare Revelation 20). It is thought by many that just as 1800 years and more have already elapsed between the first cohort or division of

The Resurrection Army

and the second, so at least a period of 1000 years (the Millenial age) shall intervene between the second and the last. The second takes place when Christ comes and consists only of the redeemed and believing saints. The third takes place at the end of the world.

After speaking of the order of the resurrection, the apostle next (4), refers to the nature of the Resurrection body itself (35-57), which will be

Incorruptible, 42.
Glorious, 43.
Powerful, 43,
Spiritual, 44.

Finally, we have the practical effect of the doctrine in its stimulus to steadfast effort here in the Lord's service through assurance of the final reward (58).

THE NEXT LESSON IS EPHESIANS.

REVIEW of the last lesson:

1. Give the possible history of the subject of chapters 8-10.

2. Give Paul's three-fold answer to their implied question.

3. Can you quote 10:31?

4. What two evils required correction in their conduct of public worship?

5. How would you account for the gross administration of the Lord's Supper?

6. Name the six divisions under which the subject of spiritual gifts is treated.

7. How do prayer and conference meetings seem to have been conducted at that time?

8. Can you name the five leading divisions in Paul's argument for the resurrection of the body?

9. What will be the order of the resurrection?

10. What will be the nature of the resurrection body?

The New Lesson.

If you will look back to our second lesson in the book of Acts you will find it stated that the epistle to the Ephesians contains probably the profoundest spiritual truth revealed to man in the New Testament. The reasons why it was given through Paul to the Christians at Ephesus are also hinted at. In the epistle to the Romans we have two very noticeable statements, the first at its beginning, the second at its close. The first refers to the Gospel, which it speaks of as promised or revealed before by the prophets in the holy Scriptures, and which was never hidden. Compare Romans 1:1, 2, with Galatians 3:8. The second refers to the "mystery which was kept secret since the world began, but now is made manifest." Romans 16:25, 26. As it is the business of the epistle to the Romans to explain the Gospel, so is it the business of the epistle to the Ephesians to explain the mystery. Chapter 3:1-12. I do not say that Romans from the practical point of view is not the more useful or important for us to master; but he who has really mastered Romans will never be satisfied till he has done the same with Ephesians. He may not know what is in Ephesians, but he will feel instinctively that somewhere in the New Testament there will be that for which his soul now yearns. A need of knowledge has been created which he feels satisfied God will supply. He has a desire to get down deep into "the whys and wherefores" of things, which the contents of Ephesians gratify.

You will recall that the Old Testament prophesied continually of the kingdom to be set up on earth with Israel as its center and the Messiah as its reigning Head. In the Gospels this kingdom was offered to Israel in the acceptance of its King, but was rejected. In the Acts of the Apostles it may be said to have been offered them again, and again rejected. Nothing more is heard or said about it till we reach the book of Revelation, where we see the kingdom actually set up, Israel converted and triumphant, and Christ on the throne. Here then is a long interval to be accounted for between the departure of Christ out of the world and His coming again. This is

The Church Period

which is covered by the teachings of the epistles. Now the church, be it understood, is a distinct body from the Jews on the one hand, or the Gentiles on the other. Neither is it identical with the kingdom, but separate from it. It is something unique. Something not heard of in the Old Testament. Something specially given to Paul to reveal. It had its earthly beginning after Christ's ascension into glory. It will have its earthly ending when He comes again, and it is caught up to meet Him in the air (1 Thessalonians 4:13-18.) Thenceforward it will reign with Him over the earthly kingdom then to be set up. The church is composed of a people taken out from among both Jews and Gentiles, and is called

The Body of Christ.

Under this figure it is referred to in 1 Corinthians 12:12-27, and Colossians 1:18, 24, 2:19, etc., but the doctrine itself is amplified and enlarged upon only in Ephesians.

Let us call our theme, therefore, The Spiritual Constitution of the Church. We might define it as The Mystery of the Mystical Body of Christ, but I think the former the better title for our present purpose. Paul treats of it under four heads, to wit:—

1. Its origin.
2. Its standing.
3. Its design.
4. Its duty.

First, as to the origin of the church, its source is seen to be in the will or choice of God the Father. Chapter 1, verses 4, 5. The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ hath chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world. Evidently no merit or claim of ours comes into the consideration of the case at all. Indeed, the transaction

is not primarily with us at all, but with Christ. We are chosen in Him before we came into existence.

But, speaking after the manner of men, it were not enough that God the Father should have chosen us, unless God the Son had done that which made His choice operative. And, therefore, we find it stated that the origin of the church is in the will of the Father through the work of the Son. Verses 7-13. "In whom," i. e., the Son, "we have redemption" (7); "In whom also we have obtained an inheritance," (11), or, "were made a heritage," (R. V.); "In whom * * * ye were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise," (13).

Nor were this all. The last phrase of verse 13, just quoted, suggests another thought, viz: that it were not even sufficient for the Son of God by His redemptive work to have made the choice of the Father operative, had not the Holy Spirit taken of His work, so to speak, and applied it to us individually, and made it our possession, (13, 14). All these verses should be read in the Revised Version.

It is sometimes affirmed by the unevangelical that the doctrine of the Trinity is not found in the New Testament. It is indeed true that the word "Trinity" is not found there; but the great and mysterious truth for which it stands is the very warp and woof of the New Testament. Just see how it is interlaced with, or rather forms the very foundation of the origin of the Christian church itself! The origin of the church then, let us say, is

1. In the choice of the Father.
2. Through the work of the Son.
3. By the sealing of the Holy Spirit.

The next division is

The Standing of the Church.

by which we mean the position it occupies before God in Christ. Of course, when we speak of the church as a body, we mean every individual member of that body; and when we speak of their standing or position before God in Christ, we mean their present standing or position, not that which will be their privilege by-and-by merely, but that which is really their blessed possession now though they are yet in the flesh on the earth. The high priest in his relation to Israel in the Old Testament is a beautiful type of the truth here sought to be set forth. You will remember our studies about him and his office when our lessons were in the Pentateuch. When he entered into the most holy place on the great day of atonement he did so representatively. He carried the names of the twelve tribes engraven on the precious stones which rested on his shoulders and composed his breastplate. They, i. e., the whole nation, entered there in him. All the exalted privileges he there enjoyed they as a nation enjoyed in him. Correspondingly, Christ now represents us in the tabernacle in the Heavens, and we are blessed with all spiritual blessings there in Him (chapter 1, verse 3). What are some of those blessings? In other words, trace along with me through the following verses some of the things which are at this moment true of every believer, and which constitute his standing or position before God in Christ.

He is for example:—

Chosen, 4.
Sanctified, 4.
Adopted, 5.
Accepted, 6.
Redeemed, 7.
Forgiven, 7.
Enriched, 8.
Enlightened, 9.
Sealed, 13.
Quickened, 2:1.
Exalted, 6.
Consecrated, 10.
Reconciled, 16.
United, 21.

At the close of the first chapter, in which he dwells more particularly on what we have called the origin of the church, Paul breaks forth in a prayer that his readers may have the aid of the Holy Spirit in apprehending the wonderful things he has thus revealed to them (1:15-23). He does the same in this case, and with good reason (3:1, 14-21). These prayers will repay the most earnest and prayerful consideration. Let us make them our own.

It is at this point that the apostle enlarges somewhat upon the "mystery" referred to. At chapter 3, verse 1, he begins an allusion to his prayer on their behalf, but is shunted off from his topic which he does not take up again till we reach verse 14. The intervening verses, 2-13, are really parenthetical. It is his allusion to his mission to the Gentiles that has this effect. That mission he will now speak about in passing. It was a special dispensation to him (2). How was it made known to him (3)? Had he ever referred to the matter before (3, 4)? Had it been known to men at any earlier time (5)? How does he define the secret or mystery (6)? The Revised Version omits the word "same" before "body," thus emphasizing that

fact—the body of Christ, as the real mystery of which the apostle speaks. The body of Christ, of course, is synonymous with the church of Christ, i. e., the true church composed of regenerated, living members united to the Head 1:22, 4:15, also Colossians 1:18. What was one purpose of God in revealing the mystery at this time (10)?

The Design of the Church.

The question asked above and answered in the text quoted, leads up to the third division of our treatment of the contents of the epistle, viz: the design of the church. To simplify the matter, let us ask, Why has God manifested this grace and done all these wonderful things for us in Christ? Why has God saved sinful man? The answer in John 3:16 at once suggests itself, but it does not go deep enough. Granted that God so loved the world as to give His only-begotten Son to die for it, the inquiry will not down as to why He loved it so? The answer is found only in this epistle, where at least three times in the first chapter, verses 6, 12, and 14, it is said that these things were done to the praise of His glory or the glory of His grace. The explanation of God's wondrous love towards us, therefore, is that it terminates on Himself rather than on us. It glorifies Him to so act toward us in Christ. We instinctively feel that here is an object, a motive worthy of such acting, worthy of such a sacrifice as that of Christ. If it humbles us to think that we are not occupying the first place in God's thought concerning our salvation, it comforts us at the same time as we realize a sense of security in the fact that His own glory is involved in the perfecting of the work of grace in us. He does it for His name's sake!

But how, or in what way, is

God's Glory to be Manifested

in the church? Compare for an answer chapter 2:7, 22, 3:10. According to the last-named passage the church is now, even at the present time, an example of God's manifold wisdom to the principalities and powers in Heavenly places. According to the first-named, it is to be an exampl of the riches of His grace in the ages to come. And according to 2:22, it is, and is to be this example from the point of view of His habitation in the Spirit. Compare Revelation 21:1-3.

We might, therefore, outline this third division of the theme thus:—The Design of the church is

1. To be to the praise of God's glory.
   a). As an example of grace in the ages to come.
   b). As an habitation of God in the Spirit.
   c). As an example of His wisdom now to principalities and powers in Heavenly places.

The Duty of the Church.

This fourth and last division of the epistle is more easily discovered than the others and is found in the last three chapters. The duty of the church in the light of all the foregoing is simply to walk worthy of her high calling (4:1). This walk is outlined in three directions. She is to walk

1. In charity, 4:2.
2. In unity, 3-16.
3. In purity, 17-6:21.

This exhortation is then applied to the three classes of the social order, as follows:

1. Husbands and wives, 5:22-33.
2. Children and parents, 6:1-4.
3. Masters and servants, 6:5-9.

The whole concluding with very definite instruction as to the need as well as the supply of grace and power to accomplish the desired result, 6:10-20.

THE NEXT LESSON IS COLOSSIANS.

REVIEW of the last lesson:

1. How do the contents of Ephesians compare with the other epistles?
2. How would you compare Ephesians and Romans?
3. What dispensational period do the epistles treat of?
4. What is the church?
5. In what other epistles than Ephesians is it thus referred to?
6. What may be stated as the theme of Ephesians?
7. Under what four heads does Paul treat of it?
8. Describe the origin of the church.
9. What great truth of the Godhead is outlined in the answer to the above question?
10. What is meant by the "standing" of the church?
11. Name some of the "spiritual blessings" we now possess in Christ.
12. How many apostolic prayers are found in this epistle, and in what connections?
13. What chapter contains Paul's allusion to the "mystery," and what is the mystery?
14. What is God's purpose or design in the church?
15. What is the duty of the church?
16. In what directions does Paul apply the practical teachings of this epistle?

The New Lesson.

Colosse was an important city of Phrygia in Asia Minor, situated to the east of Ephesus. It is not definitely known that Paul visited it, and yet it is assumed that he did so on his third journey. Chapter 2:1, however, would seem to point in the opposite direction. Those who believe he never visited the city suggest Epaphras as the founder of the church there (1:7, R. V.). The epistle seems to have been written while Paul was a prisoner at Rome, 4:8, about A. D., 62, and sent by Tychicus, 4:7, 8.

Colossians bears a somewhat similar relationship to Ephesians as that of Romans to Galatians, That is, it seems to make a pair with that epistle, and to have been written almost simultaneously therewith. It was sent by the same messenger, (compare Ephesians 6:21, 22). It also contains some of the same expressions. Compare 1:4, with Ephesians 1:15, also 1:14 with Ephesians 1:7. Compare the prayers in the two epistles also, and the references to the Body of Christ.

The Theme of Colossians.

The central theme of Colossians is Christ, while that of Ephesians is the church. In the first-named we have the Head, and in the last-named the Body of the church. Both are thus seen exalted on high (Colossians 1:18, Ephesians 2:6). Perhaps it would be well to designate the theme of the epistle as, "The Headship of Christ," or "the Believers' Union or Identification with Christ."

It is quite evident from the contents that the epistle was occasioned by the fact that the spiritual life of the church was threatened by false teaching. See especially 2:4, 8. This false teaching seems to have been in the direction of

Angelolatry 1:16, 2:10, 15, 18.
Ritualism 2:16.
Asceticism, 2:20-23.

They, i. e., those influenced by the false teachings, seem in the first place to have questioned Christ's true relationship to God and to the spiritual and natural worlds. In the second place, they seem to have questioned the facts of an objective atonement, and like the Galatians, sought to supplement the Gospel by Judaism or an equivalent. While in the third place, they doubted sanctification by the Holy Spirit, accepting instead methods of a physical and dietetic character. Indeed the whole region of Phrygia roundabout is said to have been particularly prone to mystical and fanatical superstitions of one kind or another. Professor M. B. Riddle, characterizing the situation, says that while "the errors were not fully developed, they nevertheless seemed to combine Grecian philosophy, Oriental mysticism, and Jewish asceticism, all three leading away from the headship of Christ."

The same authority divides the epistle into four parts:

Doctrinal, 1.
Polemical, 2.
Hortatory, 3-4:6.
Conclusion, 4:7-18.

In the first chapter Christ is shown to be the All in All. For example: After the salutation, (1:1-8), and the prayer (9-13), as in Ephesians, we have a declaration of His fulness (14-22), as

Redeemer, 14.
Creator, 15-16.
Preserver, 17.
Head of the Body (the Church), 18.
Reconciler, 20-22.
Sanctifier of His people, 22.

This declaration is, in turn, followed by that of Paul's ministry (23-29). It is noticeable in this latter declaration that Paul speaks really of a

Two-fold Ministry.

The first is the ministry of the Gospel itself, (23), and the second that of the mystery or secret of the Body of Christ (24-27). Notice carefully his language in verses 25 and 26, which agrees entirely with Ephesians 3. This explains the otherwise difficult allusion in verse 24 to his filling "up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ." "Christ" here seems to stand not only for the Head but the Body as united with the Head. Compare 1 Corinthians 12:12. Thus Paul was filling up on his own part that which was lacking, having his own share in the suffering of the mystical Body for that Body's sake. Notice also the marginal reading of the last phrase of verse 25. "To fulfill the Word of God," is rendered, "fully to preach the Word of God;" from which may be gathered that such is not done save as we reveal and emphasize this secret hitherto about the Body of Christ, the mystery of the church, composed of a people called out from both Jews and Gentiles, distinct and separate from the coming manifested kingdom.

Before leaving this chapter let me call the attention of the class further to that description of Christ in verse 15 as

"The First Born of Every Creature,"

which has given anxiety to some as seeming to cast a doubt on His deity or Eternal Sonship. In the light of so much else to establish that great truth we might dismiss the apparent difficulty without fear. But it may be interesting to add that certain Greek scholars, conspicuous among them being S. P. Tregelles, show good reason for translating the words, "First-born before all creation."

We did not find time in our preceding lesson in Ephesians to analyze either of the apostolic prayers. Observe in this one however (9-13) the four needful petitions:

1. That they might be filled with the knowledge of God's will.
2. That they might walk worthily of the Lord in fruit-bearing.
3. That they might be strengthened with power to endure temptation.
4. That they might be thankful.

These prayers are very suggestive as the bases of practical sermons, and Bible readings.

The Polemic Chapter, 2.

Having established the fact that Christ is the Head of the Body in whom all fulness dwells, the apostle now warns his hearers against being led away from Him (1-7). They were in danger of this through the philosophy of certain false teachers (8), and through the Judaism or asceticism of others (16-23). Perhaps we are hardly justified in making any rhetorical distinction between these false teachings, as it may be, the philosophy and vain deceit referred to in the first instance (verse 8) covers the whole. It will be seen that these Colossian Christians were in danger of putting the shadow for the substance—ordinances instead of Christ (16, 17), and a humility of the flesh, i. e., the old carnal nature, instead of one wrought by the Holy Ghost (18, 23).

Let it be carefully observed that the apostle inspired of God meets these errors with the asseveration of positive truth; and that this truth is none other than that of the believer's.

Identification with Christ

involved in the proposition about the mystical Body. The believer is

Circumcised, 11.
Buried, 12.
Risen, 13.
Quickened, 13,

with Christ, and this on the basis of what Christ Himself did for him in His own death and resurrection (14, 15).

It is seemingly foolish to speak of the revelation of one truth in the New Testament as more wonderful than another where all are in a sense alike wonderful. But this one contributes to the assurance of faith in the experience of those who apprehend it as perhaps none other can. Let the illustration of our own bodily formation aid in that apprehension. If my head dies, my body dies; if my head rises from the dead, my body rises; if my head possesses quickening life, my body possesses that life. Now Christ is the Head and the church is His Body, and we believers are individual members of that Body. Everything, therefore, which is true of the Head is true of the Body. The more we dwell upon this thought the more assurance can we draw from such familiar passages as Romans 8:1, and kindred teachings of the New Testament. Oh, the unsearchable riches of that expression "In Christ," and that other one, "Christ in you!" Let us take up this prayer of Paul upon our lips and seek that God may lead us into the understanding of them. Compare again Romans 6:1-14.

The Hortatory Chapters, 3-4:6.

The writer has just shown that in a legal or judicial sense as members of

the mystical Body of Christ we, as believers in Him, have died and risen with Him, and He now exhorts us to live accordingly. On the basis of our identification with Christ in other words, we are now, first of all, to set our affections (or "our mind," R. V.), on heavenly things, i. e., on these very things he has been specially revealing to us (3:1-4).

We may, in the second place, be said to do this in the degree in which we "mortify," i. e., put to death our "members which are upon the earth" (5-11). That is, forever give up those sins of body and mind enumerated in the verses just referred to. It deserves particular notice that the renunciation of these things on the believer's part are assumed to be quite possible on the ground of his standing in Christ, however it may have been before.

But this exhortation is further carried out in a more positive form by what the believer is expected to put on, to add to his life. as well as by that he puts away (12-17). This too, it is assumed he is able to do. We have seen how he is able to do it in the study of Romans 8, i. e., through "the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus," through the operation of the Holy Spirit in him giving him the victory.

It will be already seen how this applicatory part of the epistle as well as the doctrinal part agrees with Ephesians, but the similarity is rendered the more striking by the further coincidence that the three classes of the social order are again singled out for direct address viz:

Husbands and wives, 18,19.
Parents and children, 20, 21.
Masters and servants, 22-4:1.

Much is said and written in these days about sociological topics, and chairs of sociology are being endowed in colleges and seminaries; but after all, the Bible is the best text-book on that subject to be found. If private Christians were more faithful in its perusal and preachers in its plain and simple exposition, who can tell what a solution might be found for our present problems of the family and the state?

The several topics under the head of the "Conclusion" in chapter 4:7-18, are so simple in their outline as to require no particular treatment here.

As we have a little space to spare, however, it might be profitable to occupy it with a further allusion to chapter 3:1-15, which affords a splendid outline for an expository discourse on

The New Life in Christ,

and the way to live it. The first half of the proposition is found in verses 1-4, and the second in verses 5-15. We have in the first half:

1. The fact stated—"Ye were raised." With this compare 2:10-13, Romans 6:3-11, Galatians 2:20, Ephesians 2:5, 6.

2. The conclusion drawn—"seek." Seek in the sense of "set your mind," i. e., think about these things. The ideal controls the man.

3. The contrast presented—"Not on things on earth." There is a right use for these, but only when the supreme desire is above. See Philippians 3:20, 1 Peter 2:11.

4. The reason exhibited—"Ye died"—"your life is hid." As the life of an oak is in the acorn and manifests itself when the oak appears, so also with the Christian in Christ.

5. The result promised—"Appear in glory," Romans 8:17-23; 1 Thessalonians 4:16, 17; Hebrews 9:28; 1 John 3:2.

Note that the commands of the Bible are addressed to our wills. "Set your mind" and God will bring your feelings into conscious harmony with it.

We have in the second half of our proposition, i. e., the way to live the new life in Christ:

1. Some things to be mortified, i. e., to be put to death, to be eliminated from our thought and conduct, 5-7. Compare Romans 8:5, 15:3, Philippians 3:19. It is worthy of attention that this mortification is in a sense a continual process in the Christian's life. 1 Corinthians 15:31, 2 Corinthians 4:11.

2. Some things to be put off (8-11). The difference between "mortifying" some things and "putting off" some other things seems to be that the "putting off" follows the dying as leaves fall from dead twigs. Mortify lust and greed, for example, and it is easy to put off that which proceeds from them, viz: anger, indecent conversation, falsehood and the like. Notice our encouragement to do this in the continual "renewal" we are receiving in order thereunto. Read verse 10 in the Revised Version, and compare Romans 12:2, Titus 3:5, 6. Notice also our secondary motive to do this in the oneness which exists in Christ (verse 11). It were as though the Apostle said How can we give way to such things as anger, and wrath, and lying against one another when we are so completely and vitally one? Read this verse in the Revised Version. Notice a third thing, that while the new man in Christ Jesus is a

fact, i. e., an instantaneous, accomplished actuality, yet the

Renewal of the New Man

is a process. He is "being renewed" (R. V.). See Rom. 12:2, Philippians 2: 12, 13, Titus 3:5, Hebrews 13:20,21. Notice finally, that union with Christ precedes true self-denial and leads up to it. We "put off" these things only because we have first "put off the old man." His "doings" (R. V.) follow himself. What the world and the merely professing church call self-denial are as different from the self-denial of the Gospel as wax fruit is different from that which grows out of the vine. 1 Corinthians 5:7, 1 Peter 1:22.

3. Some things to be put on (12-15). The putting on in this case easily follows the putting off, is part of it in fact, just as the putting on of the new leaves in spring is not only an effect but in one sense a cause of the putting off of the old ones of winter. Notice the things to be put on are like the garments covering the body, and how that the girdle binding them altogether is the bond of love. Notice also the twofold result following—peace and thankfulness. How simple and plain is the Word of God! He does not deal in generalities but definite statements. Here are at least a dozen standards, easily understood, by which to try our lives.

THE NEXT LESSON IS HEBREWS.

REVIEW of the last lesson:

1. When and where was the epistle to Colosse written?

2. With what other epistle does it most nearly compare?

3. What would you say was its theme?

4. What seems to have been its occasion?

5. How may the epistle be outlined?

6. What seems to be meant by fully preaching the Word of God?

7. What great and positive truth is emphasized in chapter 2?

8. In what respect do Ephesians and Colossians touch upon sociological questions?

The New Lesson.

The epistle to the Hebrews is the first thus far met as to whose authorship there is any uncertainty. It has usually been ascribed to Paul, although some who have doubted its Pauline authorship have, (without any good reason that I can see), named Apollos, Barnabas, or Timothy as its author. It will have been observed that the epistle itself does not refer to its human source, hence this perplexity. And yet the perplexity is not so great but that the consensus of opinion in the church holds to the idea that Paul wrote it. It is so judged partly from the early traditions to that effect, and partly from the character and style of the epistle itself which are very much like others by that author. This latter argument, of course, is more apparent to the reader of the Greek text than the English translation.

To Whom Addressed, and Why.

The same uncertainty attaches to the church addressed in the epistle, whose whereabouts are not given and are unknown. It is evident that they are Jewish and not Gentile Christians, but where they lived is the question. Personally, I am inclined to agree with those who think of them as Jewish Christians dwelling at Rome.

But while this uncertainty exists as to the authorship and destination of the epistle, there is none whatever as to its purpose and scheme. Evidently it was penned with a two-fold object in view, viz: to comfort these Jewish Christians under persecution, and to restrain them from apostatizing, i. e., going back to Judaism again.

The Character of the Persecution.

I am of the opinion that the epistle was written rather late as compared with the preceding ones, and when the character of the persecutions the Christians were called upon to endure was more trying, and their sweep more extended than before.

At the first these persecutions were limited to the hatred and opposition of the Jews only, while the Gentile authorities did not trouble themselves very much about the spread of the new religion. See Acts 18:12-17. But as Christianity developed this indifference was changed into alarm for the prevalence of the Pagan religion, see Acts 17:5-9. This alarm in turn was followed by antagonism and opposition from Roman Emperors, Governors and Magistrates.

Now the persecution previously inflicted by the Jews, while cruel and hard to bear, was nevertheless limited and restrained in character by the fact that Jewry was simply the vassal of Rome, whose rights and privileges in such matters were circumscribed. See John 18:31. But when Rome herself was aroused against the Gospel the dogs of war were let loose indeed.

It should not occasion surprise if under these circumstances the Jewish converts to Christianity began to question the wisdom of their course in renouncing the religion of Moses for that of Christ. Was it worth while? Did it pay to become Christians in the light of such suffering? While they remained content with Moses they were permitted to abide in peace, but now that they had accepted the faith of the Nazarene trial, and loss, and distress followed them everywhere.

These reasonings were made all the more cogent and moving also by the fact that the Temple at Jerusalem was still standing and all the gorgeous and magnificent ritual of the Jewish priests was carried out from day to day. How mean in comparison the simple worship of the followers of Jesus! No temple, no ritual, no priesthood! How could the twelve apostles, mostly plain fishermen, be compared with the great prophets of old? And the angels who appeared to the fathers, where were they in connection with this new religion?

The Apostle's Argument

in meeting all this was simply one. Christianity, he protested, is better than Judaism. There were many arguments and proofs he might have used to convince them of this, but he selects only one. Christianity is superior to Judaism

As Seen in its Founder, Christ.

This is the theme of the epistle throughout. He turns it this way and that, but he never loses sight of it. He digresses every now and then to exhort his hearers to remain steadfast in consequence of the truth he is presenting, but he returns to the truth again and piles proof upon proof in its demonstration to their intellect and heart.

What the Temptation Was.

Let us be very clear as to the precise nature of the apostasy to which these Hebrew Christians were tempted. It was different from that of the Galatians, for example, who were tempted by the Judaizing teachers to supplement their faith in Christ by the works of the ceremonial law. In their case the thought was still to remain Christians only to strengthen their position as was supposed, by this additional means. Here however, the attack of the tempter was of a still more serious nature, and contemplated the renunciation of Christianity altogether on the part of those who had once accepted and confessed it. The distinction thus set before us is very necessary to be borne in mind in order at all to understand such expressions as those in the sixth chapter for example, which seem to contemplate an utter falling away from which there is no return.

We are now doubtless ready to consider the main outline of the epistle, which represents Christ the founder of Christianity as superior to

Prophets, 1:1-3,
Angels, 1:4-2:18,
Moses, 3:1-4:13,
Aaron, 4:14-10:22,

1. Christ is superior to the prophets, (1:1-3). It was natural that these Hebrew Christians should think much of such majestic characters as Samuel, David and Isaiah, and perhaps compare Jesus and His immediate followers with them to the disparagement of the latter. But Christ is as much superior to them as a Son is superior to a stranger. Their revelations were various and fragmentary, but His was complete. Moreover theirs were in a sense introductory, but His final.

2. Christ is superior to the angels (1: 4-2:18). It was true that the Old Testament or Jewish revelation was 'mediated' by angels. Again and again such heavenly and glorious messengers visibly appeared unto their fathers, but consider how high the Son is exalted above them! Dr. Wayland Hoyt thus outlines the argument from verses 2 to 8:

Christ is better because He is Son (v. 2).

Christ is better because of all things He is heir (v. 2).

Christ is better because He is the world's creator (v.2).

Christ is better because He is the raying forth of God's glory, and, as the seal stamps the wax, the very image of God's substance, person (v. 3)

Christ is better because, easily and and calmly, by His simple word, He upholds all (v. 3).

Christ better because, by His atoning sacrifice, He has purged our sins (v. 3).

Christ is better because, at the right hand of the Majesty on high, He sits administering universal rule (v. 3).

Christ is better because the infinite Father has declared Him Son (v. 5).

Christ is better because He is to be worshiped (v. 6).

Christ is better because angels are but messengers at best (v. 7).

Christ is better because He is forever enthroned (v. 8).

It is at this point the apostle makes the first of the digressions spoken of, in which he warns and exhorts his hearers because of the foregoing facts to remain true and steadfast in the faith. See particularly 2:1-4. He returns again to the comparison of Christ with the angels, for the purpose of showing however that while He was higher than they intrinsically and essentially as God, yet He became also low as man in order to redeem and deliver man. In this sense too, therefore, His superiority is shown. Read carefully 2:10-18, for references to His power and sympathy as shown in His intercession, and above all in His sacrificial death, which gives the potency to the intercession. That phrase which speaks of Him as having tasted

"Death of Every Man,"

should not be pressed too far as teaching a universal salvation. 'Every' in this case means 'all' to be sure, but all, as another has pointed out, in the sense of without distinction but not without exception. He tasted death for both Jew and Gentile in other words, but only as Jew and Gentile believe on Him do they receive its benefits.

3. Christ is Superior to Moses. 3: 1-4: 13.

The esteem in which the Jews regarded Moses is everywhere indicated in the New Testament. Nor does Paul in

this epistle belittle him in the slightest degree as a servant of God. He was faithful in all his house (2). But what comparison does Paul use to show the superiority of Christ (verses 3, 4)? After all, in what capacity did Moses serve(5)? And how, in comparison, did Christ serve (6)?

A this point the apostle once more digresses to exhort and warn his hearers to remain firm and steadfast (3:7-4:13). If they fell away what would be the cause thereof (12)? How were they to encourage each other to continuance in the faith (13)? What caution does he give them (14)? What sad example does he set before them (16-19)? What would they lose in the event of their final apostasy (3:1-11)?

4. Christ is Superior to Aaron, 4:14-10:22.

We now reach the chief point of comparison in the epistle, where the priesthood of Christ is set side by side with that of Aaron. On the latter had been placed all their dependence as Jewish worshippers, but it is here shown to be only the shadow of which Christ's priesthood was the substance.

From the very beginning Paul had been leading up to this truth, and you will notice preliminary allusions to Christ's priesthood even in the second chapter (verses 16-18), and the third chapter (verse 1). Here His mercy and faithfulness are referred to, the apostle recurring to the subject again at the close of chapter 4 (verses 14-16), after his digression arising from the comparison with Moses. It is at the fifth chapter however that the argument proceeding from the priesthood of Christ really begins. It is essential, first of all, to prove that

Christ is a Priest.

And this is done chapter 5:1-10. What is the office of a priest (1)? What should be the character and disposition of a priest(2)? How did the high-priest in Israel receive his appointment (4)? How did Christ receive His appointment (5, 6)? What invitation did He receive for His work (7-10)? What Old Testament Scripture is quoted in verse 6?

Before the apostle proceeds further he steps aside from his main argument again to warn and exhort to steadfastness in the faith. What was the reason presumably that these Christians were so vulnerable to temptation of this kind (5:12-14, 6:1-3)? What solemn warning do they receive (4-8)? Does Paul really believe they will utterly fall (9)? How might they by the grace of God, keep themselves from falling (10-12)? What remarkable ground of assurance did God give them (and us) (13-20)?

Of a Higher Order Than Aaron.

Three times has the apostle stated that Christ was a priest after the order of Melchisedec, and now at the seventh chapter he goes into detail with reference to the matter, giving us the history of Melchisedec, and indicating the particulars in which His order was higher than the Aaronic. There has been some question as to whether this Melchisedec with whom we first met in our study of Genesis was a human being, or whether he was one of the Christophanies of the Old Testament period—one of the many manifestations of the Second Person of the Trinity in the flesh. But recent archaeological discoveries tend to settle the question in favor of the view first named. Correspondence of the Egyptian kings of that period has been brought to light in which are found some letters from a certain king of Jerusalem, Ebed-Tob, which means "the servant of the Good One." He is seen to be a priest-king dominating in Canaan, to whom the neighboring princes were compelled to pay homage and tribute. This man, there is strong reason to believe, was the successor to Melchisedec of the time of Abraham. Indeed in one of his letters to the king of Egypt he employs the very phrases used in verse 3, saying that neither his father or his father had exalted him to his place, but that "the prophecy of the Mighty King had caused him to enter the house of his father." Both Hommel and Sayce, two great authorities on the subject, are clear that "the mighty king" referred to is no earthly monarch, "but the Deity to whom Ebed-Tob owes his position and whom he serves."

Let us now see in what particular

The Order of Melchisedec

was higher than that of Aaron. In the first place, it was a kingly order, Melchisedec was king as well as priest, suggesting the reference to Christ as the Priest upon His Throne, in Zechariah's prophecy. In the second place. it was a continual order—"neither beginning of days, nor end of life." In the third place, it was an order that received tithes from Abraham instead of paying them. How does the writer show that this subjection of Abraham to Melchisedec was in a sense that of the whole

Aaronic priesthood (9, 10)? In the fourth place, it was an order that conferred blessing on Abraham, (and hence on the Aaronic priesthood), instead of receiving such. What argument is drawn from that fact (6, 7)? How does Paul show that the choice of another priesthood than the Aaronic on God's part, indicates a change in the method by which He would now have men saved and perfected (11-19)? We perceive then that the order of Melchisedec was higher than that of Aaron in at least four particulars. It was

Kingly,
Continual,
Receiving tithes,
Conferring blessing.

"The type will be perfectly fulfilled," says Urquhart, "only when the Jews receive Christ, and give Him the portion which God demands."

But Christ is superior to Aaron not only because His priesthood is of a higher order, but for other reasons. For instance, what token of superiority is named in verses 20-22? And again in verses 23-25? And verses 26-28? Moreover Christ is not only thus superior because He was made priest by an oath, and because He is unchangeable and holy, but also because He is the minister of

A Better Covenant.

See chapter 8:1-6. How is this better covenant described (10-12)?

And He is the minister also of a better tabernacle. See chapter 9. How is the worldly tabernacle described (1-5)? How is the service of the high priest with reference to the Most Holy Place described (6, 7)? What relation did this service bear to the work of Christ on our behalf (8-12)? How is the efficacy of Christ's work expressed (13-14)? What was absolutely necessary on the part of Christ in order to make that work effectual (15-23)? In what essential particulars does the offering of Christ's blood by Himself differ from the offering of the Aaronic high priest (24-26)? When Aaron entered the Most Holy Place with the blood of the offering, He afterwards appeared again before the congregation to bless them. What does this action seem to have typified with reference to the work of Christ (27, 28)?

Finally He is not only the minister of a better covenant and a better tabernacle, but also

A Better Sacrifice.

See chapter 10. Wherein lies the weakness of the Aaronic sacrifice (1-4)? What Scripture is quoted and applied to Christ (5-10)? By what action on the part of the ascended Son of Man is the completion of His sacrificial work represented (11-14)? What does the fact that Christ offers no further sacrifice on behalf of His people prove with reference to them (18)?

Observe that the apostle having now concluded the argumentative part of his epistle, finishes with a further exhortation and appeal to steadfastness. What means of grace does he reveal to us in verses 19-23? What additional means in verses 24, 25? What should move to the employment of these means of grace (26-31)? What appeal is made in verses 32-35? What promise is held out in verses 36, 37? What great principle of Christian living is set before them in verse 38? How is faith defined, 11:1? What illustrious examples of its power are set before us in this chapter (4-40)? Observe that these examples are

The Witnesses

referred to 12:1. They are the men and women in earlier centuries who in their lives bore witness to the meaning and power of faith. We are to believe and copy them. But what still nobler witness to faith is named, verse 2? What is Jesus more than simply a witness to faith? What comfort under trial and persecution is afforded in verses 5-11? What warning in verses 14-29?

The outline of the fourth division of Paul's argument, therefore, that in which he shows the superiority of Christ over Aaron, might be stated thus:

Christ is a priest, 4:14-6:19,
After a higher order, 6:20-7:17,
Made with an oath, 7:20-22,
Unchangeable, 23-25,
Sinless, 26-28,
Of a better covenant, 7:1-13.
Of a better tabernacle, 9:1-24,
Of a better sacrifice, 9:25-10:22.

THE NEXT LESSON IS I AND II TIMOTHY.

REVIEW of the last lesson:

1. What uncertainty attaches to the epistle to the Hebrews?

2. To whom is its authorship usually ascribed, and why?

3. For what two-fold purpose was it evidently written?

4. How did the present differ from the former persecutions presumably?

5. To what reasonings may this fact have given rise?

6. With what argument does Paul meet these reasonings?

7. State the temptation to which these Hebrew Christians were exposed as compared with that of the Galatians.

8. What are the four main points in the outline of the argumentative part of the epistle?

9. Give the outline which shows Christ's superiority to Aaron.

10. In what four respects is the superiority of the order of Melchisedec shown over that of Aaron?

11. What archaeological evidence can be given to show the historical reality of Melchisedec?

12. Who and what are meant by the cloud of witnesses, 12:1?

The New Lesson.

We will consider the two epistles of Timothy in their order. It is generally agreed that they are the latest which Paul wrote. The first is supposed to have been written after his imprisonment at Rome, and hence would date two or three years later than the Acts of the Apostles, or about 65 or 66. The proof of the late authorship of 1 Timothy is for example, the instances of advanced or well-developed heresy it records. See 1:3-11 and 4:1-8. In what direction did this heresy point (4)? What ambition seems to have given rise to it (5-7)? What shows that it may have been of a legalistic character, a disposition to unduly magnify the law above grace (8-11)? How is this idea further illustrated by the second passage referred to (4:3, 4)? How severely does the apostle characterize such false teaching (4:1, 2)? It will be immediately said that the modern illustration of this false teaching is Romanism. But however true that is, let it not be forgotten that spiritualism also, as well as certain other phases of Theosophic doctrine presents a close parallel.

A corresponding proof of late authorship is found as well in the advanced or well developed ecclesiasticism which the epistle shows. Allusion is made in chapter 3 to bishops and deacons, for example, showing a marked growth in that direction over anything found in the previous epistles we have studied.

The Personal History of Timothy.

It will be interesting to consider Timothy himself before we analyze the epistle addressed to him. From what place did he emanate? Acts 16:1-3. Of what extraction was he? Same reference. To whom, instrumentally, does he seem to have owed his conversion? 1 Timothy 1:2. What reason have we to believe that he was associated with Paul in his ministry? Acts 16:3, 17:14. See also the connection of his name with Paul in the salutation of several of the epistles. What important city was the scene of his own personal labors? 1 Timothy 1:3. What reason is there to believe he may have visited Rome? 2 Timothy 4:21. As to the private character or temperament of Timothy, there is ground for the opinion that he was inclined to be timid and retiring in disposition, if not actually slothful from a spiritual point of view. It may be doing an injustice to his noble memory to say this, and care is needful, but attention might be callel in justification, to such allusions as 1 Corinthians 16:10-11, 1 Timothy 4:12-16, 2 Timothy 1:6-8, and 2:3, 4.

It will be seen before we conclude that this epistle is, from one point of view, a treatise on the work of the Christian pastor, and in that connection, and while thus speaking of the person of Timothy himself, let us notice what kind of a pastor he, personally, is exhorted to be. 4:12-5:2, will furnish a good text for an expository "charge" to a pastor which some member of the class may at one time or another be called upon to give. Timothy was to be:

A holy man, (12),
A working man, (13),
A growing man, (15),
A loving man, (1, 2),

The Outline of the Epistle.

It should be observed, as another has pointed out, that in these two epistles, the inspired penman is elaborating no great doctrines as in other of his productions, but only urging truth previously elaborated. Hence in this case we are not to look for any steady flame of revelation so much as a continuation of brilliant sparks.

1. We have first, the apostolic greeting, 1, 2.

2. We have in the second place, a charge concerning false teachers, 3-20. We have already considered this briefly in the opening of the lesson, and nothing more need now be said about it further than to call attention to the use of the word "conscience," a stranger in our apostolic studies hitherto, which Paul employs twice in this connection. It would seem that the interest of these teachers in the law was one which went no further than the "vain jangling" which had been deprecated, and did not lay hold in any way of their own inner life. The circumstance is of importance also from another point of view. Paul's teaching of free grace has sometimes been impugned as affording license for sin. But this shows him to be in perfect accord with James whom we study next, as insisting on the tenet that "faith without works is dead." Faith, he declares, should be held in connection with "a good conscience."

3. We have a charge concerning prayer 2:1-15. What is the command in regard to it in verses 1 and 2? For what reasons personal to ourselves should this requirement be complied with (2)? Who are particularly singled out for this office of prayer? Notice the reading of verse 8 in the Revised Version. How is the other sex contrasted in the verses following? What reasons are given for this subjection of woman (13, 14)? The difficulty of harmonizing this instruction with historical facts, or even with what the apostle himself says on the subject of women's part in the church as mentioned in 1st Corinthians, was spoken of in our lesson on that epistle. I have no solution to offer, and am awaiting light. In the meantime let us be careful not to fall into the ways of some who are given to criticising and even condemning Paul, lest haply we should be found criticising and condemning God. We must remember that it is the Holy Spirit Himself who speaks through Paul, and until we see what the true explanation is, it becomes us to be very humble and modest in the statement of our opinions.

Church Offices, 3.

4. We have in the fourth place, a charge concerning

Name the fifteen required qualifications of a bishop or overseer of the flock (1-7). Name the seven qualifications of a deacon (8-13). Observe that the word "wives" (verse 11), is translated "women" in the Revised Version; which gives rise to the supposition that it is not the wives of deacons who are thus referred to necessarily, but female deacons (deaconesses).

5. We have in the fifth place, a further charge concerning false teachers, 4:1-11. In what manner is the false teaching in this case differentiated from the former case? How is the reference to "conscience" again introduced? What is shown to be the peculiar tenets of this heresy? To what period of time does it especially refer? How does this show that this age is not likely to grow better of its own accord? How does it indicate that the second coming of Christ will be pre-millenial?

6. We have in the sixth place, a charge concerning Timothy himself, 4:12-16. We have already briefly considered this, and yet a question or two additional may not be superfluous. From what personal circumstance was his influence likely to suffer? How was it to be offset (12)? What was needful on his part (and hence on the part of every young minister and Christian worker), to insure his spiritual growth and development (13-15)? What shows the vital necessity of his acting on this exhortation (16)?

7. We have in the seventh place, a charge concerning church government, 5-6. I do not pretend to be very exact or discriminating in these divisions which, like most of those in the other lessons indeed, are only offered by way of suggestion, and so as a help in the direction of more thorough and analytic work. What five distinct classes in the church are named in chapter 5:1-3? Which of these classes is treated of at length in verses 3 to 16? What would you gather from verse 4 to be the meaning of that phrase "a widow indeed," in verse 3? To whom does the solemn obligation of verse 8 apply? What specific regulations are given for the charitable care of widows (9-16)? What were some of the duties of

The Elders of the Church

verse 17? What explanation of the phrase "double honor," in verse 17, is suggested by the Old Testament quotations in verse 18? What other explanation is afforded by verse 19? What corresponding obligation rested on the elder as suggested by verse 20? What warning or caution is given Timothy with reference to what we would call the ordination of elders (21, 22)?

Of what class does the apostle treat in chapter 6? What shows that there was false teaching in the church on indus-

trial questions in those days as well as in the present (3-5)? How does verse 5 indicate that some employes were being encourrged to impose on

Their Employers,

on the ground that they were fellow Christians? What light does it throw upon the motive that actuated them? How does Paul rebuke that spirit (6-10)? At the same time, how is the whole question balanced with reference to the rich master or employer (17-19)? It will readily be seen how this bears out previous observations to the effect that the Bible is the best treatise on sociology to be found.

The Second Epistle.

The evidence for the late authorship of 2 Timothy is found in the apparent allusions to Paul's second imprisonment at Rome. After his first imprisonment spoken of in the Acts, he is thought to have visited the regions further west, returning once more to Rome only to be put in chains a second time. On this occasion, tradition further holds, his hearing before Caesar did not result as happily as before, but was followed by his death, probably by beheading. Some of these events seem to be referred to, more or less dimly, in the epistle now to be considered. See for example, 1:16, 2:9, 4:6, 16, 17, 21.

The purpose of Paul in this epistle seems to be thus to speak of his own personal affairs as indicated in the foregoing passages, and also in 1:4, 4: 10, 11, 13, and their contexts; which afford reading of a peculiarly touching character.

But another purpose also was to further exhort Timothy along lines very similar to those giving rise to the earlier epistle. This exhortation or charge might be cursorily outlined somewhat as follows: After the salutation, 1:1-5, he is exhorted to

Boldness in testimony, 1:6-14,
Fidelity to the Scriptures, 3:1-4:5.
Separation from worldliness, 2:1-14,
Discrimination in teaching, 2:15-21,
Holiness of life, 2:22-26,

Under the first head what is there to corroborate our previous intimation of the possible weakness and timidity of Timothy's temperament or character (6-8, 13, 14)?

Under the second division how does Paul seek to cheer and encourage him to steadfastness and fidelity (4-7, 10-12)?

Under the third and fourth divisions what indicates that the earlier tendencies in the church towards human philosophizing as opposed to simple Bible exposition still continued (16-18, 23-25)? To what particular doctrinal error had this already led (18)? In what spirit were these heretics to be met (24, 25)? How does verse 26 read in the Revised Version?

Under the fifth division what parallel is found to certain prophetic teachings in the first epistle about the character of

The End of this Age (3: 1-5)?

Compare also verse 13. What only safeguard against this deception and corruption is named in verses 14-17? What are the Scriptures only able to do (15)? What else (16, 17)? What clear and strong testimony is here found to their authority and infallibility? What is to be the chief duty of Timothy as a Christian minister and pastor (4:2)? Why is he to be careful and diligent in its fulfillment (3, 4)? Is there anything in our own times to suggest a fulfillment of Paul's prediction in these verses? To whom besides Paul is "the crown of righteousness" promised (8)? Do you love, i. e., are you earnestly looking for and desirous of the Lord's coming?

The Distinction Between the Two Epistles.

Rev. E. W. Bullinger, D.D., of England, in one of his valuable tractates speaks of the first epistle to Timothy as showing the church in its rule, and the second as showing it in its ruin, i. e., in its outward manifestation on earth. In each of these two spheres, he adds, the child of God is instructed how to carry himself. In the first, the appointment and qualifications for offices and officers of the church are treated of. In the second all seem to have failed, and the faithful witness is shown how he is to deal with those who "turn away" from the truth, "err concerning the truth," and who "resist the truth;" and to wait and look for the appearing of "the righteous Judge."

The same excellent exegete and expositor gives an exceptionally interesting outline for a Bible reading on

The Seven Characters,

in which Timothy the "man of God" is viewed in the second epistle, chapter 2, showing each to have its own exhortation. For example:

In verse 1, he is a "Son," and is to "be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus."

In verse 3, he is a "Soldier," and to be a "good" one must "endure hardness."

In verse 5, he is a "Wrestler," and must "strive lawfully."

In verse 6, he is a "Husbandman," and must first partake of the fruits.

In verse 15, he is a "Workman," and must show himself "approved unto God."

In verse 21, he is a "Vessel," and must be cleansed, and thus "prepared unto every good work."

In verse 24, he is a "Servant of the Lord," and must be "gentle * * * apt to teach."

These happy and fruitful suggestions will be availed of I doubt not, by many of the workers in our class.

THE NEXT LESSON IS THE EPISTLE OF JAMES.

REVIEW of the last lesson:

1. What suggests a late authorship for 1 Timothy?

2. What can you recall of the personal history and character of Timothy?

3. What is the nature of the first epistle?

4. What are the themes of the six different "charges" it contains?

5. Give an illustration of the value of this epistle as an authority on sociology?

6. What suggests a late authorship for 2 Timothy?

7. What is the two-fold purpose of this epistle?

8 What five exhortations does it contain?

9. What light is thrown upon the character of the end of the present age by both epistles?

10. Can you quote 2 Timothy 3:16,17?

11. Can you quote 4:8?

12. What distinction does Dr. Bullinger draw between the two epistles?

13. What three parties are singled out with reference to their attitude towards the truth?

14. What seven characteristics are assigned to Timothy, and what exhortation is attached to each?

The New Lesson.

There are three persons by the name of James mentioned in the New Testament, respectively, the brother of John, the son of Alpheus, and the brother of our Lord. The first two were numbered among the Twelve, and the last was not. Indeed the last is supposed not to have been a believer until after the resurrection of Jesus. The first fell an early martyr (Acts 12). The second is not reported of apparently after Acts 1, while the third and last is supposed to have early attained a position of strong influence in the church and to be the one spoken of in Acts 15, and Galatians 2. It is he also who wrote this epistle according to the judgment of most, if not all, those scholars best qualified to give an opinion. He was sometimes known as

James the Just,

because of his marked uprightness of character. His conception of Christianity or the Gospel has more of a Jewish cast than that of Paul, but there is no ground for the opinion, sometimes loosely expressed, that there was antagonism or contradiction in the teachings of these two equally Divinely-inspired men. The utterances of James which seem to give rise to this belief will be noticed when reached in the present lesson, but in the meantime let us remember that they are both in perfect accord except that one is treating of the Gospel from the Gentile and the other from the Jewish point of view.

To Whom Written?

The Jewish complexion of James' epistle is seen more perhaps in what he omits than in what he states. One misses the frequent references to and the deep teachings concerning the redemption of sinners by the blood of Christ which form the very warp and woof of Paul's letters, but their absence is explained in part at least by the occasion and general character of the epistle. It was evidently written for Jewish Christians altogether. See 1:1, 2:21. Also observe the frequent references to the "law" with which they had the better acquaintance and towards which they sustained a special relationship. 2:8-12.

Their Condition.

It is of interest to note that the temporal condition of the people addressed included very markedly the rich and the poor, each of which classes is addressed with impressive plainness, 2:1-10. Corresponding thereto it will be seen that their spiritual condition was not what could be considered unqualifiedly good. They had intellectual faults as we shall see, and moral faults. They seemed to be guilty of hearing without doing, and believing without working. They were guilty of respect of persons as well, of evil speaking, and of covetousness or greed of gain as will be indicated more distinctly in the outline.

The Outline of the Epistle.

The main purpose of the epistle seems to have been three-fold:

To comfort the tried.

To admonish the wrong-doers.

To instruct the weak.

But as these divisions are not what might be termed "clear cut," or coterminus with the different chapters, it may be better for us to examine the

chapters first in an interrogative way, each one by itself and in regular order, and then sum up the conclusions at the end under their respective heads.

Chapter One.

After the salutation, what class or condition of persons is first referred to (2-4)? Under trial, what counsel is given them (5-8)? What additional ground of comfort is afforded in verse 12? To whom had some been inclined to charge temptation (13)? How does the epistle correct their error (13-15)? Instead of God's being regarded as the author of evil, of what is He rather the author (16-18)? On this premise what practical exhortation is based (19, 20)? And what else (21)? From what subtle error are they warned (22-25)? In what two particular ways might they demonstrate that they were doers and not hearers only of the Word (26, 27)?

Observe that verse 27 tells what true religion is, that is, how it shows itself, but it does not tell us how it comes. Verse 18 tells us that. Verse 27 is often quoted by moralists as containing the sum and substance of what man is expected to do in order to please God, in order to be saved, so to speak. But they forget that James is addressing men already saved by grace, and that in verse 27 he is merely telling them how they may show themselves to be saved. Having got religion by the grace of God through Christ, this is one way to show that you have got it. Verse 27 should always be applied in connection with and in the light of verse 18.

Observe another thing in this chapter, viz: the important distinction which exists between the testings of God and the temptations of Satan. Verses 2 and 12 refer to the former, and verse 13 to the latter. God sometimes "tempts" men in the sense that He tests them, as in the case of Abraham, Genesis 22, but this is far different from the character and object of the temptations of the Evil One. The two ideas and experiences are clearly differentiated in this chapter.

Chapter Two.

What two things are incompatible with each other? Read verse 1 in the Revised Version. In what way had they been guilty of respect of persons (2-5)? Why should they not judge in this way (5)? How did they exhibit toadyism in this matter and unfaithfulness toward God (6, 7)? On what principle should they have acted (8-13)? What instructive teaching about the nature and extent of sin is found in verse 10? How does the apostle deal with the question of believing without working in verses 14-26? How does verse 14 read in the Revised Version? What additional word before "faith" shows that it is not true faith he speaks of but false faith? What class of beings are conspicuous for faith without works (19)? How does verse 22 qualify the preceding one? We shall be kept from imagining a conflict between James and Paul on this question if we remember that Paul is usually speaking of faith as a saving principle, while James is simply referring to its application in daily life. Paul also believed in a faith that grew, and that "worked" by love. 2 Thessalonians 1: 3, Galatians 5: 6.

Chapter Three-Four, 12.

What gross evil is dealt with in chapter 3? What word is substituted for "masters" (verse 1), in the Revised Version? What two figures are used to show the power of the tongue (3-5)? To what is the tongue likened (6-8)? In what way, presumably, had the tongue been abused (14-18)?

What led or gave rise to this envying and strife (4: 1)? What is the translation of "lusts" in the Revised Version? What is the translation of "kill" (verse 2) in the margin? Why had their prayers for these things they desired remained unanswered (3)? How does verse 4 indicate that its reference is to spiritual adultery? How does verse 5 read in the Revised Version? How does that rendering emphasize the fact that the Christians referred to were walking not in the Spirit but in the flesh? Is there a possible hint here that the things they were envying and coveting in an unholy sense were spiritual gifts? Have we met with that kind of envying and coveting before in any other epistles? How do verses 6, 7, 10 seem to justify this opinion? How does verse 11 indicate that we are still on the same general subject of the "tongue"?

Chapters 4: 13-5: 12.

To what class of the social order is the attention of the apostle now turned (4:13, 5:1)? What spirit of commercialism is rebuked in verses 13-16? What further light is thrown on the nature and extent of sin, verse 17? What solemn prophecy against the iniquitous rich is contained in chapter 5: 1-3? What charge is laid at their doors (4-6)? What specific council is given the po-

pressed laborers (7-9)? What examples are set before them (10, 11)?

Chapter Five, 13-20.

We have here some very plain directions about prayer. What was the course to be pursued in the case of sickness (14, 15)? Endless discussion has been had as to the application of these words to present day experiences, and I cannot hope to put an end to it, by anything I can say. Some of the Lord's people are healed by the prayer of faith in our day as truly as in the apostolic period, and some of them are not so healed. Oil has been used in some of the instances of healing and in some it has not been so used. Every man must be fully persuaded in his own mind. My own judgment is that much light is thrown upon the subject by the meaning of the last sentence of verse 16. I have seen it translated thus: "The energized prayer (or supplication) of a righteous man availeth much." That is, the prayer which is energized or wrought in the righteous man by the Holy Ghost. Every true Christian has had experience of such prayers. There have been times when the Spirit of God has seemed in a peculiar manner to put a particular petition on his heart, and when, as a result, he has been convinced of the certainty of the answer, in which conviction he has not been disappointed. These times are not general, but special. May it be that they explain James 5:16 to any extent?

We are now prepared to sum up the teachings of the epistle somewhat under the three heads already suggested.

The apostle comforts his hearers by showing them:

a. the result of trial, 1:2-4.
b. the reward of obedience, 1:12.
c. the coming of Christ, 5:7, 8.
d. the mercy of God, 5:11.

He admonishes them to be

a. doers of the word, 1:19-27.
b. pure and sincere in judgment, 2:1-10.
c. careful in speech, 3.
d. just in their dealings, 5:1-6.

He instructs them concerning the

a. nature and extent of sin, 1:13-15, 2:10, 4:17.
b. need of good works, 2:14-26.
c. nature and value of prayer, 1:5, 6, 4:3, 5:13-16.

It is hardly necessary for me to point out the number of helpful Bible readings afforded by the study of this epistle.

THE NEXT LESSON IS 1 AND 2 PETER.

REVIEW of the last lesson:

1. How would you distinguish James, the author of the epistle, from the other New Testament persons by that name?

2. How does the epistle of James differ characteristically from the epistles of Paul?

3. What, generally speaking, was the temporal and spiritual condition of the persons addressed?

4. State the three-fold purpose of the epistle.

5. In what four ways are the persons addressed comforted?

6. On what four points admonished?

7. On what themes instructed?

8. What did you learn about sin in this lesson?

9. What about prayer?

The New Lesson.

The epistles of Peter should be especially interesting to us because of the personal history of the human author, of whom we learn so much in the earlier parts of the New Testament. To speak of the first epistle in its order, from what place does it seem to have been written (5:13)? And to what people (1:1)? What would you understand by the word "strangers" in this connection, those who were only unknown personally to Peter, or those who were strangers in the sense that all true Christians are really strangers and pilgrims on earth? Compare 1:17, 2:11.

The Apostle of Hope.

The three graces, hope, faith, and love are all well represented by the three leading apostles of the New Testament. John represents love, Paul faith, and Peter hope. The hopefulness of Peter's character, the expectancy of his disposition must have been apparent to you as you read of him in the Gospels, but the characteristic is equally marked as you study his writings. See for example, the frequent use of the word "hope" in this epistle. 1:3, 13, 21, 3:15. See also the close relation existing between earthly suffering and Heavenly glory in the mind of the apostle. Observe how they are related in his treatment of subjects pertaining not only to the believer but also to Christ Himself. 1:6, 7, 11, 4:12, 13, 5:1, 2, 4, 10.

Condition of the People.

It is quite evident that these Christians to whom Peter wrote were in the endurance of persecution, occasional at least, if not continual and formal. This may be gathered from such allusions as 3:17, 4:12-19, etc. It is also likely that as in the case of the epistle to the Hebrews, this persecution was of a pagan rather than a Jewish source (4:3, 4). While their outward condition was thus one of more or less suffering, their inward or spiritual condition could not be said to be quite as good perhaps as that of the Thessalonian Christians under similar circumstances. Certain faults, or at least blamable tendencies are pointedly alluded to here and there. See 2:1, 11, 12, 16, 3:8-12,4:9, 5:2, 3.

The Object of the Epistle.

If you will turn to the last chapter at the 12th verse, you will ascertain that there was a two-fold motive in writing this epistle, viz: "To exhort and to testify." And concerning what particular thing is the testimony said to be borne?

Here will be found a striking text for a sermon, the outline or divisions of which will be furnished by the epistle as a whole. The text might be limited to the five words: "The true grace of God," and then we might search the preceding verses diligently to see in what that 'true grace' consisted in the apostle's mind. My own judgment is that the doctrinal portion of the epistle being limited to the first few verses, we shall find "the true grace of God" stated in the following proportions:

Election, 1:2.
Regeneration, 3.
Reward, 4.
Sanctification, 6, 7.
Service, 2:5-9.

The Outline of the Epistle.

We have first the customary salutation (1:1, 2). In this case however, I would call your attention to a further illustration of how the doctrine of the trinity is interwoven with the New Testament Scriptures. We saw it very markedly in Ephesians. But here notice election by God the Father, sanctification by God the Spirit, and redemption by God the Son.

Following the salutation we have a declaration of God's mercy (verse 3).

This mercy is exhibited in our possession of a loving hope (3).

This hope is based on the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead (3).

The nature of this hope is that of an incorrupt, undefiled, and unfading inheritance (4).

The certainty of this hope is seen in the power of God to keep us for it (5).

The consummation of this hope will be in the last time (5).

The "last time" synchronizes however, not with the end of the world, but with the appearing (second coming) of Jesus Christ (6, 7).

The obligations resting on us and based upon this hope constitute in their recital the whole of the remaining contents of the epistle. It will be thus seen that

The Key to the Epistle,

or the pivot on which all its very practical teaching turns is the fact of the second coming of Christ. Some of these practical teachings, or obligations resting on us upon the ground of this hope are here outlined:

Sobriety, 1:13,
Hope, 13,
Holiness, 14-16,
Fear, 17,
Love, 22, 23,
Growth, 2:1-3,
Praise, 4-10,
Self-control, 11, 12,
Submission to authority, governmental, industrial, conjugal, 13-3:7,
Patience, 8-22,
Unworldliness, 4:1-7,
Hospitality, 8, 9,
Humility, 10, 11,
Fidelity, 5:1-4,
Trust, 7,
Watchfulness, 8, 9.

If you are teaching this lesson to other classes it might be well to emphasize certain relations of truth which are very conspicuous, e. g., we are not to hope that we may obtain hope, but on the contrary because we have obtained it (1:3), we are to exercise it (13). In the same way we are not exhorted to become holy in order to obtain an inheritance from God, but rather because we have obtained the inheritance we are to become holy (compare verses 3-5 with 13-16 of chapter 1). We are not to love the brethren in order to purify our souls, but our souls having been purified by faith, set free to love, we are now to love.

Notice in chapter 2 how that there is no separated priesthood in the Christian church, but that all believers are alike priests, and that the sacrifice they have to offer is clearly defined—not the mass or penance, but simply praise.

Notice another illustration of the opposition of Christian teaching to all forms of anarchy and lawlessness, and how the Word of God is able to settle questions of a political and social as well as religious nature (2:13-3:7).

Notice the strong and frequent encouragement given in this epistle to the righteous sufferers (3:14-17, 4:12-14).

Notice that Peter, like Paul, is obliged to restrain and exhort against unholy pride in the use of spiritual gifts (4:10, 11). There is much said by him also concerning humility from other points of view (4:5, 7); recalling that Peter perhaps more than others of the twelve had to undergo some severe lessons in the accomplishment of that grace.

The Second Epistle.

The second epistle of Peter is even more general in its address (1:1), than the first, nor is there any mention made of the place whence it was written. For these reasons, and the further fact that its style is thought to differ considerably from that of the first epistle, its canonicity was doubted at one time, but biblical scholarship is now practically agreed as to its authority and rightful place in the canon.

As in the case of the first epistle, we find a motive for writing it in the closing verses of the last chapter (3:17, 18), where the apostle's object is apparently stated to be two-fold, i. e., to caution (17), and to exhort (18). Against what are his hearers warned? To what are they exhorted? Compare also 3:1, 2.

Outline of the Epistle.

Bearing in mind the object as being a caution against falling from steadfastness and an exhortation to grow in grace and knowledge, we have in the working out of the plan:

1. The caution and exhortation enforced 1:1-11. To whom is the apostle here addressing himself (1)? How does the Revised Version translate this verse? What have we learned from Romans to be the meaning of the phrase "the righteousness of God?" How may we realize the benefits of the caution and exhortation referred to (2)? Are grace and peace the only benefits acruing to us in this way (3, 4)? The apostle's antidote for falling from grace is growing in grace. Along what lines is this growth directed (5-7)? What advantage is gained by diligence along these lines (8-11)?

2. The apostle has spoken of this growth in grace as being acquired through "the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord" (2-4), and he now in the second place, proceeds to give us the grounds of this knowledge, (12-21). For example, there is his own testimony in the premises (12-18), and there is the teaching of the Old Testament Scriptures. The allusion in verse

15 to a purpose on his part to leave behind him after his decease some record of the Gospel, corroborates the opinion of many that he was really the author of Mark's Gospel, to which fact reference was made in our study of that book. What does Peter say as to the character of the testimony he has to bear (16)? What evidence did he have of that of which he speaks (17, 18)? To what incident in Jesus' earthly life does he here refer? To what event in the life of Jesus therefore did the Transfiguration bear special witness (16)? How does this allusion to that event tally with what we found to be the pivot or the keynote of Peter's first epistle?

How does Peter describe the Old Testament Scriptures (19)? How does he express the authority they should have for us (19)? What testimony does he bear to their Divine origin (20, 21)? With what express declaration of Paul does this agree (2 Timothy 3: 16)?

3. After dwelling on the knowledge of God as the means of our growth in grace, and exhibiting the grounds on which that knowledge rests, the apostle in the third place, very naturally describes the false teachers who were seeking or would seek to undermine or destroy that knowledge in some (chapter 3).

He had in the previous chapter spoken of the true prophets of the Old Testament days, but there were false prophets then as well (1). We met with them again and again in our study of Kings, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel. What does Peter now prophesy concerning such in the days to come (1)? What does he say of their success (2)? And their punishment (3)? How does he enforce or illustrate the certainty of that punishment (4-6)? What discrimination will be made in that day of judgment (4-9)? How does he describe their character (10-22)?

4. The description of the false teachers is next followed by that of the teaching itself (chapter 3). What doctrine will these false teachers chiefly antagonize (3, 4)? What shows the ignorance and folly of their argument as presented in verse 4 (5-7)? What great fact as bearing upon God's dealings with men is enunciated in verse 8? Why is not the day of Christ's second coming hastened (9)?

The Day of the Lord.

Verse 10, which describes "the day of the Lord," requires a little explanation perhaps, to make it tally with other descriptions of and allusions to the same day with which we have met hitherto in both Testaments. The Day of the Lord is an expression covering doubtless a long period of time. Compare verses 8 again in demonstration of it. See also 2 Corinthians, 6: 2, where the "day of salvation" spoken of seems to be co-terminus with the whole of this Christian dispensation. In like manner the Day of the Lord may be co-extensive with the millenial age to follow, and hence be capable of witnessing a great number of events. This is thus said to prepare the way for the further statement that the change in the heavens and the earth revealed in verse 10 will probably not occur at the beginning but at the end of that age. For the events that will occur at the beginning of that age when the Lord comes to take up His church into the air, visit the living nations with judgments, restore Israel, and set up His Kingdom on the earth, you are referred to what we have learned from the Old Testament prophets, practically the whole of them, and more recently in the epistles to the Thessalonians. Peter here seems to be speaking of what shall take place at the end of that age, and which is more fully treated of in Revelation 20, verse 11 and the following.

What particular warning and exhortation does he base on this great event (11, 12)? What hope eternal is set before true believers (13)? How does this agree with Revelation, chapters 21-22? With what other apostle does Peter claim to agree in all these things (15, 16)?

THE NEXT LESSON WILL BE 1 JOHN.

REVIEW of the last lesson:

1. How may Peter be characterized as distinguished from Paul and John?

2. What substantiates this characterization?

3. What was the object of the first epistle of Peter?

4. What doctrines may be said to constitute "the true grace of God" according to Peter?

5. What is the key to the first epistle?

6. What are some of the obligations resting on believers because of their hope in the second coming of Christ?

7. How does Peter set forth the truth about the priesthood of believers?

8. What particular Christian grace does Peter especially emphasize?

9. On what grounds was the canonicity of the second epistle questioned for a while?

10. What was the object or purpose of the second epistle?

11. What was the first point made in the execution of this purpose?

12. The second point?

13. On what grounds does Peter ask us to base our knowledge of God and of Christ?

14. Can you quote 2 Peter 1:21?

15. The third point?

16. What doctrine would the false teachers of this age chiefly antagonize?

17. How would you explain 2 Peter 3:10?

The New Lesson.

The first epistle of John is addressed to no particular church or individual, but it is the thought of some that the apostle had in mind a cycle of churches like perhaps the seven churches of Asia (see Revelation 1). It is quite likely that the Christians to whom he wrote were mostly of Gentile rather than Jewish origin as judged by the few references to the Old Testament, and also by such allusions as that in chapter 5:21.

It is thought too, that the epistle was written later than the Gospel by the same author, as gathered from the circumstance that an acquaintance with its facts is pre-supposed, and also because the words of Christ are cited as if known.

The occasion and object of its writing seem to have been furnished by the presence of false teachers, as we may judge from many passages, of which 2:18-26, and 4:1-6, are examples. And indeed, as a matter of fact, we learn from the writers of church history that at a very early period there were three classes of heretics as they were called. (1.) The Ebionites, who denied the Deity of Christ; (2.) the Docetists, who denied His humanity, (3.) the Cerinthians, who denied the union of the two natures, human and Divine, prior to His baptism.

The Theme of the Epistle

is stated very clearly to be "Fellowship with God" in chapter 1:3, 4, and the idea is presented to us not in a constant progression of thought, but after the manner of the law of recurrence, which we have come to recognize so clearly in other instances. Perhaps it might be said rather, that the apostle gives us three distinct cycles of thought, not very difficult to perceive and which form in their combination a very beautiful picture of truth, and a very impressive and cumulative application of the main line of instruction. For example, God is light (1:5), hence fellowship with God depends on our walking in the light. Again, God is righteous (2:29), hence fellowship with God depends on our doing righteousness. And finally, God is love, (4:7, 8), hence fellowship with God depends on our possessing and manifesting love.

Introduction, 1: 1-4.

In the introduction to this epistle three thoughts are set before us concerning the apostleship of Christ, which may be thus expressed:

1. The proofs of apostleship, viz: to have seen and heard Christ, verse 1.

2. The character of the apostleship, viz: the declaration of Christ, verse 2.

3. The object of the apostleship, fellowship in Christ, verses 3, 4.

What peculiar expressions in the opening chapter of John's Gospel are recalled by the first verse? What bearing has this upon the statement that the Gospel was first written? Against which of the heresies, previously mentioned, do these words seem directed? How does the Revised Version translate verse 2, especially the phrase "that eternal life"? Against which of the heresies, previously mentioned, do these words, as given in the Revised Version, seem directed?

The First Cycle of Thought, 1: 5-2:28.

What is the first message that John declares to them (5)? If "God is light," how is fellowship to be maintained with Him, (6, 7)? If fellowship is only to be maintained by walking in the light, how may we walk in the light?

1. By perceiving and confessing sin in the faith of Jesus Christ (1:8-2:2).

2. By keeping God's commandments, (3-8).

3. Especially the commandment of love to the brethren, (9-11).

4. This keeping of God's commandments is incompatible with the love of the world, (15-17).

5. It is also incompatible with fellowship of false teachers, (18-28).

Notice carefully how this last section corroborates the previous remarks concerning the nature of the heresies in John's time. Notice the peculiar title ascribed to Christ in verse 20. How does this verse and also verse 27 harmonize with such passages as John 15: 26, and Acts 2:32, 33? What then is the unction believers have received from Christ?

The Second Cycle of Thought, 2: 29-4-6.

What is the second characteristic of God which John declares to them (2: 29)? If then, God is righteous, how is fellowship to be maintained with Him (same verse)? It is interesting to observe that in the working out of the proposition that fellowship with God is to be maintained by doing righteousness, the apostle speaks of three distinct things:

1. The motive for doing righteousness, viz: the hope we have through our sonship to God, (3: 1-10).

2. The test of doing righteousness, viz: love to the brethren, (3:11-18).

3. The reward of doing righteousness, viz: assurance of salvation, (3:19-4:6).

Referring more at length to what I have called the "motive," notice particularly that our sonship to God includes likeness to Christ in His manifested glory (2). Notice too, that the evidence of the sonship is, in a sense bound up with this expectation of His coming, and the holiness of living it begets (3). Verses 3-8 practically continue the thought of Christ's holiness, and His work on the cross to make it possible in our experience. Verse 9, however, has presented much difficulty to some. There are those who draw from it the doctrine of

Sinless Perfection

as it is called, and believe it not only possible, but claim it as a fact, that some Christians are living an absolutely sinless life from whose hearts evil has been eradicated. It is not within the province of these lessons to go deeply into theology or to raise questions of controversy. But it may be stated as a contribution to the consideration of the question that the phrase "whosoever is born of God," is taken by many to refer only to the new nature in the believer which does not sin. Others again interpret the word "commit" in the sense of practice (compare Galatians 5:21, Revised Version). It is one thing to fall temporarily into sin as a consequence of sudden and strong temptation, and it is another thing to practise it, i. e., to live in the continual performance of known transgression. This no regenerated man does or can do. Our study of Romans 8 showed that the Holy Spirit was given to the believer for the very purpose of enabling him to rise as victor over sin, and I can not but believe that through His power it is possible for us to live from day to day without commission of known sin. As we advance in the Christian life, however, and in the knowledge of God's Word we are continually discovering new revelations of what sin is, and hence on that score, or in that sense, we can hardly reach perfection in the present life. The teaching of this verse therefore should always be carefully balanced with that of 1:8, where the apostle, be it remembered, is speaking to the very same persons as in the present instance.

Referring to the "test" of doing righteousness, it may impress some as peculiar that brotherly love should be insisted on again as in the case of walking in the light. But it will be found to have an equally prominent place in the third cycle of thought, thus stamping this epistle as peculiarly the epistle of love. It speaks much of God's love toward us and our love toward Him, but singularly, either side of that truth with John always runs into the corresponding one of love towards one another in Christ. What a large place this last holds in the mind of God and in the Christian life! Notice what hinders the flow of this love as indicated by verse 12. How watchful we should be over envy! Notice its importance as demonstrating our spiritual condition in verse 14. Notice the deeply spiritual application of the sixth commandment in verse 15. Notice the very practical way in which this love should be demonstrated in verses 16-18.

Referring to the "reward" of righteousness as consisting in the

Assurance of Salvation.

there is much to emphasize on the part of those who are using these lessons with other classes. In the first place, I

would call attention to the number of times and the different relations in which that word "know" is employed by the apostle. This is the "assurance" epistle all the way through as well as the epistle of love, and it is more than a simple coincidence that these two things should go together. See how much assurance of salvation depends upon our having a good conscience and a warm heart in Christ (19-21). See too, how that this assurance of salvation carries with it a corresponding assurance in prayer (22-24). Some Christians are ever asking how they may be sure that their prayers are heard. Here is the simple answer: Live the life of obedience to God in the faith of His Son Jesus Christ and dismiss all misgivings. See again, that this is the evidence of the abiding life in Christ (24), and that just in the measure in which we are pleasing our Heavenly Father as Jesus did, will we receive the witness of the Holy Spirit to that fact as He did. Finally the Christian who thus lives obediently has his assurance increased in the testimony to his overcoming of temptation. He will not be carried away by false doctrines or deceived by any anti-Christ (4:1-6).

The Third Cycle of Thought, 4: 7-5: 21.

What is the third characteristic of God which John reveals (7, 8)? If then, God is love, How is fellowship to be maintained with Him (same verses)? In the working out of the thought thus suggested, that fellowship with God is to be maintained by experiencing and exercising love let us notice (1), how His love was particularly manifested toward us (9, 10), and (2), how our love towards Him should be manifested (11, 12). In the third place, notice how such love implies fellowship (13-16). In the fourth place, notice how it effects our spiritual life, begetting assurance, (17, 18). In the fifth place, notice how its absence destroys fellowship (19-21). In the sixth place, notice how that the experience and exercise of love is only another aspect of walking in the light and doing righteousness (5:1-4). In the seventh place, notice that the basis, and in a sense, the source of this love is faith in Christ (5-12). In conclusion, notice how many things we may thus know. Verses 13, 15, 18, 19, 20.

THE NEXT LESSON IS JUDE.

REVIEW of the last lesson:

1. To whom probably, was the epistle of John addressed?
2. Why is it probable that it was written later than the fourth Gospel?
3. What seems to have occasioned its writing?
4. What is its theme, and how is it presented?
5. Name the central truths of the three cycles of thought.
6. In what three ways is fellowship with God to be maintained?
7. What is meant by "walking in the light?"
8. What is the motive, the test and the reward of "doing righteousness?"
9. How may 3:9 be explained?
10. What particular duty is emphasized in each cycle of thought?
11. What one word is frequently employed in this epistle?
12. What is the basis or source of love?

The New Lesson.

For the following outline of Jude, I am indebted in part to the late Rev. Dr. Brooks, of St. Louis, in an address delivered at the believer's meeting for Bible study at Niagara some years ago. In his estimate no book of the Bible more accurately describes the times in which we live, and none more effectually puts us on our guard against the evils that surround us. There is uncertainty as to the time when Jude was written, but the mind of the Holy Spirit is shown in placing it as the last of the epistles, thus making it a sort of introduction to the Revelation or Book of Judgments. It reveals the successive steps leading on to these judgments, and the causes that make them necessary.

The class will recognize a striking similarity between certain of the utterances of Jude and those found in 2 Peter, suggesting that one of the writers very probably quoted from the other. This is not to deny inspiration to either or both of them, for we must remember that the Holy Spirit was the real author in either case, and that He has the liberty of quoting Himself when and where He pleases. A close comparison of the two epistles, however, leads to the conviction that Jude wrote after Peter.

How does the apostle describe himself, (verse 17)? What relationship is mentioned? The fact that he was the brother of James leads to the belief that he was also a son of Joseph and Mary, cf. Matt. 13:55 and Mark 6:3. To whom is the epistle addressed (cf. R. V.)? What is the object or occasion of the epistle (verse 3)? See R. V. in this case also, and compare Deut. 4:20, Prov. 30:6, and Rev. 22:18-19.

The special features of this "faith" for which the saints are to "contend" are given in the subsequent verses in the epistle, and are summed up by Dr. Brooks in the following statements:

"(1) Faith in God the Father, v. 1. (2) Faith in the divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ, vs. 1, 4, 14, 17, 21, 24, 25. (3) Faith in the Holy Ghost, vs. 19, 20. (4) Faith in the grace of God as the source of our common salvation, v.4. (5) Faith in the testimony that he who believes is saved, and he who believes not is lost, v. 5. (6) Faith in the existence of angels, and hence of spirits apart from a material body, v. 6. (7) Faith in the historical truth of the Old Testament narratives, vs. 5, 7, 11. (8) Faith in the personality of the devil, v. 9. (9) Faith in the personal and pre-millenial coming of the Lord with His holy myriads, who must therefore have been previously caught up to meet Him in the air, v. 14. (10) Faith in everlasting punishment, vs. 6, 7, 13. (11) Faith in the verbal inspiration of the Bible, v. 17. (12) Faith in the communion of saints, v. 19. (13) Faith in prayer offered in the Holy Ghost, v. 20. (14) Faith in the power of our Savior to keep or to guard us from falling.

"A downward course is commenced when any of these articles of faith are surrendered," says Dr. Brooks, "and the Holy Spirit points out to us how professing Christians start upon the course, and how they end. (1) Comes unbelief. The Lord saved the people out of the land of Egypt, and afterward destroyed them that believed not, v. 5. (2) This is followed by apostacy, as in the case of the angels, who kept not their own principality, but left their proper habitation, v. 6. (3) This is followed by sensuality, as it was with Sodom and Gomorrah, v. 7. (4) Then are seen lawlessness, and anarchism, and socialism, and contempt of government, as seen now all over Christendom, vs. 8-10. (5) This is accompanied by an invasion of Christ's prophetic office, the preachers disregarding His Word, as did Balaam, for the sake of winning place and power, v. 11. (6) Attending this is an invasion of Christ's priestly office in the offering of strange fire, that is, fire that has not fed upon sacrifice, as it was with Korah, v. 11."

How are the false teachers described (verses 12, 13)? What judgment is predicted for them (verse 13)? To what particular New Testament truth did Enoch bear witness in patriarchal times (verses 14 and 15)? What word is used four times in verse 15? Notice that the "ungodly" may not mean so much open and flagrant sinners, as those who are simply neglectful of and indifferent to God, living in the world with no reference to His will, acting according to their own pleasure, giving currency to infidel suggestions and consumed by their own pride.

The inspired writer does not close his epistle without showing us how to escape the perils that assail us and to be prepared for service.

First, by remembering the Word of God, especially the prophetic writings of the New Testament, (verses 17-19).

Second, by building up ourselves in the faith which, in addition to meditation on the Word is to be done through prayer. Notice particularly the source of power in prayer, namely the Holy Spirit Himself (cf. Eph. 6:18); notice also that we build up ourselves in the faith as we cultivate an abiding confidence in the love of God and the mercy of Jesus Christ. Our study of 1 John will help us to appreciate this exhortation.

Third, by maintaining a compassionate interest in other brethren who are tempted by doubt (verse 22 R. V.), hating the sin while endeavoring to deliver the sinner (verse 23).

Fourth, by depending not on our own resources in anything, but on Him who is able to guard us from stumbling, and to set us "before the presence of His glory without blemish in exceeding joy,"(R. V.).

THE NEXT LESSON IS REVELATION.

THE author of this book is the same as that of the fourth Gospel. There is some question as to whether it was written earlier or later than the Gospel, but my own opinion coincides with that of those who place its origin at about 95 A. D., in the reign of the Roman Emperor Domitian.

At what place does it seem to have been written and under what circumstances (1:9)?

What was the purpose of its writing (1:1)? Let us analyze that verse. Whose revelation is this? Whence did he receive it? For whom was it intended? When should it begin to be fulfilled? To whom did Jesus reveal it? By whom was it revealed to John? To whom immediately did John reveal it (4)? What peculiar blessing is attached to this book (3)?

The theme of the book will be found to be stated in verses 7, 8, as the second

Coming of Christ,

but it will be found to contain chiefly an account of those judgments on the living nations, the false church, and the people and land of Israel for which we have been prepared in the Old Testament prophets and the Gospel of Matthew, and which are to immediately precede and culminate in the second coming of Christ. It contains also a brief reference to the coming itself, the setting up of the Millenial Kingdom, the end of that Kingdom, the judgment that shall follow, and the introduction of the eternal age.

General Outline of the Book.

The book in general may be sub-divided into five parts as follows, each of which will be considered separately:

Introductory, 1,
Epistolary, 2-3,
Apocalyptic pre-millenial, 4-18,
Apocalyptic millenial, 19-20:6,
Apocalyptic, post-millenial, 20:7-22.

The introductory section consists in its turn of four divisions, as follows:

Preface, 1-3,
Salutation, 4-6,
Theme, 7, 8,
Preparatory vision, 9-20.

The first and third of these sub-divisions have already been considered in sufficient detail, the second will have much interesting light thrown upon it by reference to the Revised Version, the fourth is a symbolic representation of Christ in His church well fitted to introduce the revelation of judgments which follow. Verse 10 has special interest because of the different interpretations given to it. While at first it would seem as if the reference to "the Lord's day" was the first day of the week on which the apostle was favored with the vision, yet perhaps a more likely view is that the expression points to the period of time when the vision is to be fulfilled. In this case "the Lord's day" is equivalent to "the day of the Lord," with which we have become acquainted in other Scriptures. This would make verse 10 in a sense parallel with verse 7, and emphasize the thought that what follows is with reference chiefly to the close of the present age and the opening of the coming one. The details of the vision it is needless to say, will repay the most careful study for which however, we would require the aid of a good commentary like that of Archbishop Trench, for example, on "The Epistles to the Seven Churches of Asia."

Epistolary.

Coming to the epistolary part of the book, we should bear in mind first, that the Seven Churches referred to were historic churches then existent in Asia, but at the same time they were also representative churches. Considering them representatively, it may be said that they were representative first, of the whole church universal at that time, that the features, good and bad, impressed upon each were for the most part found everywhere. Again, it may be said they were representative of the different forms or characteristics of the church's life more less existent in every period of her history. And finally, they were representative of dominating characteristics of her life in seven different periods of her history. While in any one period they all existed, yet in particular periods some one existed more especially than the others. Some who hold this view would maintain that the present is the Philadelphian, and others the Laodicean period. The members of the class should carefully study the two epistles referred to in the light of the other Scriptures considered, and in the light of the current history of the church and form their own opinion.

Before we leave the epistolary portion of the book let me call your attention to what has been described as the fundamental forms of the epistles. It is interesting to observe that each is put together on one general plan, and contains

An order to write,
A description of the speaker,
An address to the church,
A command to hear,

A promise to the faithful.

Observe also that the description of the speaker (Christ) has two main features in every instance. In the first place it is always taken from the imagery of the preceding vision, and in the second place, it harmonizes to a greater or less degree with the spiritual state or condition of the church addressed. Observe finally, that the address to the church has also two main features furnishing first, a description of its spiritual condition, and then an announcement of what shall come to pass in regard to it. These epistles will be found very fruitful if used for a series of Bible readings. The different promises to the churches afford a rich mine of spiritual ore.

Apocalyptic Pre-Millenial.

By the apocalyptic pre-millenial part of the book, chapters 4-18, is meant that portion whose fulfillment is believed to take place prior to the second coming of Christ to introduce the millenial reign. It is as to its interpretation the the most difficult as well as the longest portion and will receive the most of our attention. The first thing to do is to get hold of the facts, to endeavor to see clearly and describe to ourselves in some way easy to be remembered, just what it is that the prophet sees in these visions, and hence what it is which has to be explained and applied in detail. I trust your reading has helped you to see that the outline facts of these fifteen chapters may be kept in mind somewhat like this:

1. Introductory vision—the Throne, the Lamb and the Book, 4-5.
2. The opening of the seals, 6.
3. The sealing of the 144,000, 7.
4. The sounding of the trumpets, 8-9.
5. The little book and the two witnesses, 10-11.
6. The woman and the Dragon, 12.
7. The Beasts and the Image, 13.
8. The Lamb on Mount Zion, 14.
9. The Outpouring of the Vials, 15-16.
10. The Judgment on the Harlot, 17.
11. The Fall of Babylon, 18.

Three Systems of Interpretation.

We have now gotten these facts out into a place where we can separately look upon them, but the question is, What to do with them? How are they to be understood? What do they mean? How shall they be interpreted? I hope it may not discourage the class to learn that there are many theories of interpretation. As an intimation of just how many there may be, it is an interesting item that 26 pages of Darling's Cyclopedia Bibliographica are filled simply with the titles of commentaries on Revelation. But after all, the leading theories, those which have received the most attention from scholars, may be simmered down to three, known as

The Preterist,
The Historic or Continuous,
The Futurist.

The first-named is so called from a word which means the past, and represents the idea that the portion of the book now under consideration refers to events long since past, events which found their fulfillment for the most part in the first century and the subsequent fall of pagan Rome. This has been advocated with more or less variety by many expositors, but in modern times, and in America especially by Moses Stuart, whose volume on Revelation is still obtainable in second-hand book-stands.

The second treats these chapters as a progressive sketch of the course of events from the days of John to the end of the Christian dispensation. In part they have been, are being, and are yet to be fulfilled. This school of interpretation is distinguished by what is called the year-day theory, i. e., the principle that the days spoken of in the book mean in each case a year. 2 Peter 3:8. Barnes' Commentary on Revelation gives one a very good idea of the teaching of this school of thought, and also a book by H. E. Elliott, entitled, "The Last Prophecy," to be obtained probably, through the Revell Publishing Co. This last is a condensation or abridgement of a much larger work on the subject by a relative of the author, which is perhaps the most exhaustive on the subject in our language—the Horae Apocalypticae, by Elliott.

The futurist regards the whole of these chapters as yet future in their application, and beginning to be fulfilled only when Jerusalem shall be again inhabited by the Jews, a coming event which we have been taught to expect in the Old Testament. The best of the modern expositions of this view is that of Benjamin Wills Newton, entitled, "Thoughts on the Apocalypse."

It will not be necessary for us to give any attention to the preterist view for obvious reasons. If the events have already taken place they have lost much of their interest and meaning for us. but the other two schools of interpretation will be given briefly in outline.

The Historic Interpretation.

According to the Historic School, the seals for example, (chapter 6), apply to the history of the Roman Empire from the time of John, i. e., the close of the first century to the beginning of the fourth. The riders in the first four seals represent the Roman emperors of that period, and the horses the conditions then existing of prosperity followed by calamities. The fifth seal represents the era of Christian martyrs in the reign of Diocletian about A. D. 300, and the sixth the politico-religious revolution under Constantine at the beginning of the fourth century when Christianity became, largely through the power of the sword, the state religion.

2. The sealing of the 144,000, chapter 7, represents the spiritual revival among the saints which folowed the revolution under Constantine, in which revival Augustine, the great expounder of the doctrine of justification by faith was the leading figure. This doctrine represents the seal on the foreheads of believers.

3. The trumpets, chapters 8 and 9, represent the decline and fall of the Roman empire, say from the close of the fourth century to the middle of the fifteenth; the first four the destruction of the western half of the empire by the Goths, Vandals and Huns, and the fifth and sixth that of the eastern half by the Mohammedans and Turks, including the conquest by the latter of Canstantinople.

4. The "little book" of chapter 10 represents the period of the Protestant Reformation under Martin Luther in the sixteenth century, the book itself being the Bible, whose discovery by that noted monk was the immediate cause of the great event. The seven thunders are thought to represent the Papal Bulls of that period against Luther and his fellow-reformers, and the sweet and bitter tastes referred to in the chapter, the joy of the reformers followed by the persecution subsequently felt as the result of their uncompromising testimony.

5. At the 11th chapter, the prophet returns again to the fourth century according to the law of recurrence hitherto explained, and in the figure of the two witnesses gives us the history of the faithful churches of Christ amid the general apostasy, from that time down say, to the sixteenth century again. One of these churches, that in the eastern half of the empire, was known by the name of the Paulicians, and the other in the west as the Waldenses.

6. The woman and the dragon of chapter 12, represent the true church persecuted by pagan Rome. The woman is the church, the male child the enlargement of the church at the time of Constantine, the dragon the Roman Empire in the East still hostile to Christianity, (for Constantine's power was confined generally to the western half of the empire.) The wilderness flight represents the true church gradually losing worldly or political prestige under the increasing influence of the Papacy.

7. The beasts and the image of the beast, chapter 13, represent the rise of the Papacy, beginning somewhere about the sixth century perhaps. The beast is the Pope; the ten horns the kingdoms of the western half of the empire; the two-horned beast the papal clergy, priests and deacons; the image of the beast the general counsels. The number 666 represents the numerical value of the Greek word "Latienos" which means the "Latin man" or the Pope. The 1260 days represent the prophetic years from the rise of the papacy to the decline of its temporal power about 1868, the date of the ecumenical counsel.

8. The Lamb on Mt. Zion, chapter 14, represents the true church gathered around Christ, versus the false church gathered around the anti-Christ, that is the Pope, while the new song represents the rejoicing at the reformation. Thus we are brought down again according to the law of recurrence to the same period of time as that referred to at the close of the tenth chapter.

9. The pouring out of the vials, chapters 16 and 17, represent events subsequent to the reformation, some of which are still unfulfilled. The first five vials represent the French Revolution and the terrors of the great European war of which Napoleon was the chief figure, the sixth vial the decay of the Turkish Empire and the preparation for the return of the Jews to Jerusalem, still future. The three unclean spirits represent the unholy principles of government, religion and philosophy prevalent in these last days, and leading up to the final conflict between Satan and Christ at the end of this age.

10. The judgment on the harlot, chapter 17, represents the destruction of the false church, that is the Papacy, yet future.

11. The fall of Babylon, chapter 18, represents the destruction of the city of Rome itself, still future.

Futurist interpretation will be given in the next lesson.

WE are engaged at present in considering the third general division of the book of Revelation, known as the apocalyptic pre-millenial part covered by chapters 4 to 18. In our last lesson we dwelt upon the historic interpretation of that part of the book and are now to take up the view of the Futurist school. The main distinctions between the historic and Futurist schools may be indicated thus:

In the opinion of the Futurist, each vision, that is, the seals, the trumpets and the vials respectively, begins to be fulfilled not at the date of the apocalypse, namely the close of the first century, but at a point in time when the Jews will have been re-established in Palestine, and God will have begun to visit the Roman world in judgment. It is important to remember in this connection, that the Jews will at first be re-established in their old land in an unconverted state. Secondly, each vision terminates at the second coming of Christ without describing that event, or the events which follow it. In the third place, the succeeding vision in each case retraces the same ground as the preceding one for the purpose of developing the particular features that belong to it, in accordance with the law of recurrence so frequently illustrated hitherto. Finally, each vision contains a preface of blessing, that is the time of triumph in connection with the Lord's coming is seen first, and the judgments which precede its realization afterwards. The Old Testament has afforded some illustrations of this same rhetorical law of anticipation as it may be called. The discourse in Isaiah, chapters 2 to 4, is in point, where the prophet begins by describing Judah and Jerusalem in their future glory and power, and then goes on to indicate the cause why this has not been realized and the events which must intervene before it arrives.

The Opening of the Seals, Chapter 6.

The first seal for example, is the preface of blessing. Christ is supposed to be the rider on the white horse, the figure symbolizing His glorious advent. The second, third and fourth seals symbolizing the judgments on the Roman world preceding that event, for example, war, famine, pestilence, etc. The fifth seal symbolizes the faithful souls existing amid the prevailing evil, while the sixth gives us the culminating events, literal signs in Heaven and earth, immediately before the advent, corresponding to Matt. 24:29, 30.

The Sealing of the 144,000 and Sounding of the Trumpets, Chapters 7-9.

The sealing in this case is the preface of blessing, and represents the remnant of Israel preserved through the terrible tribulation of that time, (vs. 4-8), and the church of Christ caught upto meet the Lord in the air, (vs. 9-17). The six trumpets are the preceding judgments upon the people and the land of Israel partly through destructive powers of nature, and partly through superhuman agencies.

The Book, the Witnesses, the Woman and the Dragon, the Beasts and the Image, Chap. 10: 13.

The vision of the end, chap. 10:1-7, is the preface of blessing. The "little book" is the preceding witness-bearing of the faithful. The two witnesses are Moses and Elijah returned to the earth in the flesh, and dwelling in Jerusalem. The woman is the Christian system, (not the church) in certain special circumstances in Jerusalem.

The male child is the converts of the Christian system in Jerusalem prior to the absolute reign of the Anti-Christ. The beast is a secular despot who becomes the Anti-Christ. The ten horses are ten kingdoms into which the Roman empire will be divided at that time. The seven heads are seven systems which give unity to the ten kingdoms, as for example, commerce, education, religion, militarism, politics, etc. The second beast is an ecclesiastical head ruling in connection with the Anti-Christ. The 1260 days are the literal period of Anti-Christ's reign in Jerusalem as inimated in Daniel 9.

The Lamb on Mount Zion, Chap 14.

The lamb on Mount Zion with the 144,000 is the preface of blessing, and represents the earthly seat of the new and heavenly power ordering the earth during the millennium. Verses 6 and 7 represent a preceding witness-bearing of the Gospel. In connection with this witness-bearing, there will be a distinct testimony against Babylon, that is literal Babylon, which city it to be restored as the center of the commercial greatness of the world, verse 8, (see the studies in Zechariah); a testimony against Anti-Christ, verses 9-12; a testimony concerning judgments to fall on Christendom, verses 14-16, and finally a testimony as to the judgments to fall on the heathen nations and the Jews, 18-20.

The Seven Last Plagues, Chap. 15-16.

The "saints on the sea of glass" is the preface of blessing, the vials, chapter 16:1-11 are the judgments preceding its realization, (literal plagues); verses 12-14 represent a literal drying up of the Euphrates that the Eastern nations may go against Babylon. Armagedon is a literal battle fought between the Roman empire and the nations of the East, possibly assisted by the North (Russia?). Christ is seen interposing for Jerusalem.

The Harlot and the Beast. Chap. 17.

The time of this chapter antidates that of chapter 13, its subject being the development of Anti-Christ, (the beast), previously referred to. The woman is the moral and political system of Babylon, that is Babylonianism. The seven heads are the seven systems previously referred to which comprise the one system. The ten horns are the ten kingdoms of the Roman empire which sustain the system. The seven kings are the different world monarchies leading up to the last, as for example the "five fallen" are Nimrod, Assyrian, Babylonian, Persian and Grecian; the "one which is" is the Roman, the one existing in John's day; the other "not yet come" represents the constitutional monarchies of our own time, and the eighth, the Anti-Christ. The system is seen to be destroyed by the ten kings who give their power for that purpose to the Anti-Christ. Any controlling system of commercialism, socialism, etc., as represented by Babylonianism never has and never will be pleasing to kings who believe in their divine right to reign.

Chapter 18 describes the literal destruction of Babylon itself.

Part IV. Apocalyptic-Millennial. Chap. 19-20: 6.

This portion of the book requires very little in the way of special explanation, and may be outlined thus:

1. The actual coming of Christ, Chap. 19:1-10.
2. The saints (previously raised) coming with him, 11-14. See 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18.
3. The judgments on His enemies, 15-21, (these judgments are the same as those represented by the first seal, chap. 6, and the battle of Armagedon, Chap. 16). Compare also Joel 3, Zechariah 14, and Matthew 25:31-46.
4. The binding of Satan, chap. 20:1-3.
5. The actual millennial reign, 4-6. A thousand years intervenes before part V.

Part V. The Apocalyptic Post-Millennial, Chap. 20: 7 to 22.

1. The loosing of Satan, verse 7.
2. The last conflict with evil in the flesh, 8-9.
3. The distruction of Satan 10.
4. The judgmentof the dead, 11-13.
5. The destruction of death and Hades, 14.
6. The new heavens and earth, 21:1.
7. The descent of the holy city upon the earth as the tabernacle of God, 2-8
8. The description of the city, 21:9 to 22:5.
9. The postscript of the book, 6-21.

The Explanatory Note.

The following extracts are taken from the author's "History of the Holy Dead," (Revell Publishing Co., Chicago and New York, 15 cents), and will throw some light on parts 4 and 5 of the present lesson:

"It would appear that the life of the holy dead during the Millenium, will be lived neither in heaven, nor upon the earth, but between the two; and yet doubtless, having access unto both. Perhaps we have a suggestion of their mode of life in the circumstance of Moses and Elias talking with Jesus, in the presence of His disciples, on the Mount (Matthew 17). They will be unearthly persons, and yet notwithstanding that, capable of acting upon the earth in blessing it.*

"But is this all? Have we reached the end of the history of the holy dead? Is the epoch of the Millenium the final one of revelation? Is there nothing beyond the thousand years? "What saith the Scriptures?" The Millenniial age, so far as this earth is concerned, will conclude,as all its predecessors will have concluded, in a crisis of judgment. Indeed, as another very pointedly remarks, the Millennial age will show, more than any other age, the hopelessness of evil in the heart of man. The earth will then be peopled from pole to pole; its inhabitants will have before them the visible glory of the Heavenly City,with its redeemed company, resting above Mount Zion;* all the experiences of past ages, all the excellency of God's power and goodness in the Millennium itself, will have been opened to their view, but with what result? When Satan is loosed again, for a season, at the

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*Thoughts on the Apocalypse, by B. W. Newton, Hodder & Stoughton, London, England.

close of that period, they who in the meantime have not been regenerated and united to Jesus Christ, will once more yield to his seductions. They will even dare to compass the beloved City, the earthly Jerusalem, the Citadel of the Saints (Revelation 20:7-9). It will be the tower of Babel over again, and magnified a thousand-fold. It is then that fire comes down from God out of Heaven and devours them. It is then that the history of fallen, though Millennial, earth ends. Flesh will again have corrupted its way, until at length God will cease to deal with it any longer, and all things will be made new. The Millennium in other words, is not the final state for those who will then in the flesh be dwelling upon the earth; neither is it the final state for those who, in their glorified bodies, will be reigning with Christ above the earth. It is only a step onward toward that still more blessed period when sin, and the flesh and death shall be forever done away, and the Heavenly City, no longer dwelling above the earth, shall descend upon it, and there shall be 'no more sea.' "

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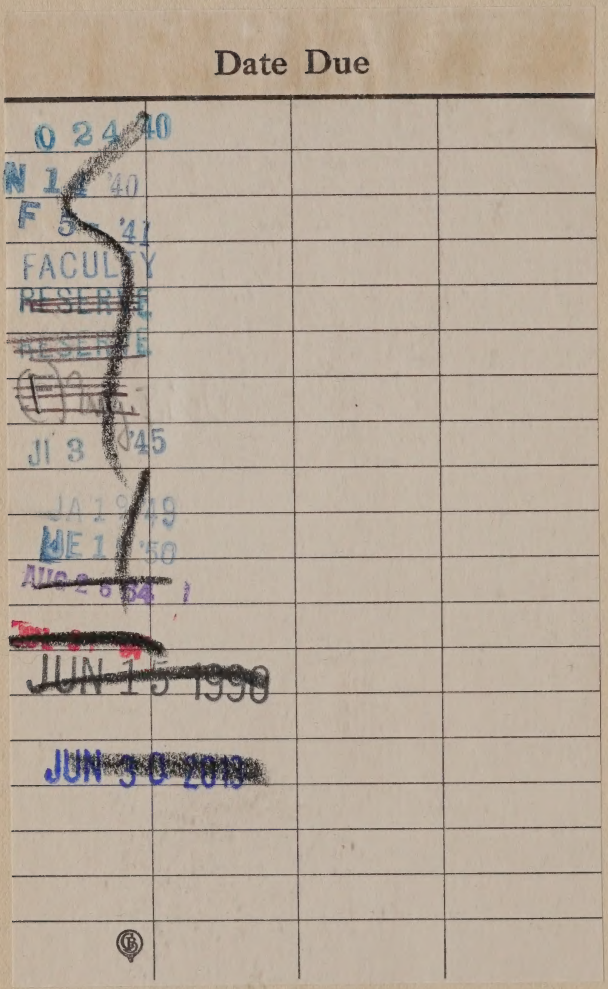
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